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V. 1



SACRAMENTAL ADDRESSES

AND

MEDITATIONS :

TO WHICH.

THREE SERMONS

ARE NOW APPENDED,

ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE SPIRIT, OBJECT, AND
INFLUENCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY THE LATE

HENRY BELFRAGE, D.D.

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, FALKIRK.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS.

Fifth Edition.

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ORIGINAL PREFACE.

AMONG the various books on religious subjects, which attest the zeal of good men for the spiritual improvement of their fellow-creatures, few have appeared directly adapted to guide the meditations of Christians in the observance of the Lord's Supper. It will be readily admitted that a publication was not unnecessary, which should be so framed as to excite devotional feeling at the altar of God, and to direct its movements to moral obedience. How far the present work answers this description, I do not presume to say.

A wish has often been expressed by serious persons, to have it in their power to peruse in the closet, some of those Addresses to which they have listened with

interest during the solemnities of religion ; and they have stated their hope, that thus those too fleeting impressions might be recalled, with which their hearts have swelled, while they thought of the loving kindness of God in the midst of his temple. To stir up the pure minds of the pious by way of remembrance, and to be a helper of their joy, were the objects of the labours of Him, whom all ministers should glory to imitate.

The reader of this volume must not expect long or methodical illustrations of the texts on which the Addresses are founded. This would by no means have suited the object of the work. Such of the ideas suggested by the texts have been selected, as applied most directly and forcibly to the objects exhibited in this ordinance, and their practical tendency and design have been faithfully stated.

Some may be disposed to censure the abrupt transitions, and the frequent expressions of devotional feeling, which occur in these Addresses ; but however inconsis-

tent these may be with the closeness and precision expected in a didactic discourse, they were, in some measure, required by the very nature and design of this work. In seasons of strong emotion, the manner in which we address men must correspond with the movements of the heart; and the language which we employ should be that of nature and feeling.

I trust, that there is nothing in this volume that can be justly charged with extravagance and enthusiasm, or with debasing the workings of religion, by the epithets or the flights of passion. The devotional language of Scripture has been my guide. Passages of Scripture, when selected with judgment, and applied with propriety, form the principal charm of religious composition. They possess a dignity, a gravity, and a melting tenderness, peculiarly their own. The care that has been taken to point out the moral influence of every topic to which I have called the attention, will shew, that the fervour which I wished to excite, is that which is zealous

in good works, not that which passes away in boastful professions, and in idle transport.

I have endeavoured to give all the variety in my power to these Addresses. If there should be an occasional recurrence of the same sentiments or expressions, they will not condemn this, who consider, that many of them were written at intervals of time very distant from each other, and that in such a number of discourses, bearing directly, as their object demanded, on one great topic, a partial coincidence could not, in every case, be avoided.

A few of the Addresses have been enlarged, as it appeared to me that Christians, when perusing them in their closets, might wish that some of the topics were pursued further.

It would be foolish to expect, that a book of this description would suit the taste of the various classes of the professors of religion. My only hope is, that they will read it with some advantage, who wish to love their Redeemer more fervently, and

to have their hearts made better. Should its reception be unfavourable, I have this consolation, that it was intended to advance the best interests and the true happiness of the good. It is my highest and most ardent desire, that it may obtain the gracious approbation of Him whose friendship is the sweetest felicity of the heart, and in whose cross alone it is my wish to glory for ever.

HENRY BELFRAGE.

FALKIRK, *August* 17, 1821.

PREFACE

TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

IN submitting this Work to the Public, it was stated, that it was not the Author's object to give formal discussions of texts or doctrines, but to exhibit such views of religious truth as might excite the devotion of communicants, and animate them to that holy practice by which their profession may be adorned. He has long been impressed with the importance of improving such a solemn season for pious excitement ; and it is his belief, that the holy counsels delivered on such occasions are, of all the lessons of ministers, the most likely to reach the heart. Religious fervour purifies and ele-

vates the affections, and will carry the fire of the sanctuary into the common duties of life.

The favour with which this Work has been received, encourages him to hope that its object has been in some measure gained. He has endeavoured to improve it in the subsequent editions, and to this one three Sermons are appended, with a view to guide communicants in preparing for this ordinance, and in the observance and improvement of it. He would have discussed these topics more minutely, and explained other points connected with this Sacrament, if he had not attempted this already in his Catechism on the Lord's Supper.

He has only to add, that it will be his continued prayer, that this humble effort in the cause of piety may be accompanied by that divine influence which can alone incline the heart to goodness, and lead the soul to its true felicity.

PREFACE

TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

“AND I heard a voice from heaven, saying to me, Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; *and their works do follow them.*”*

It is admitted on all hands, that the late Dr Belfrage was one of the most accomplished and successful writers upon the all-important subjects of doctrinal, practical, and experimental religion. His popularity as an Author continued to the close of his life; for, though he published many volumes, every succeeding work was wel-

* Rev. xiv. 13.

comed and appreciated. The rapid and extensive sale of two editions of his latest production, "Expositions of the Shorter Catechism," verifies this statement. But even since his lamented decease in 1835, the religious public has continued to manifest a very decided partiality for his works, and more especially for the *first* volume of his "Sacramental Addresses." Of the two volumes of "Addresses," which, at a considerable interval from each other, he gave to the world, the first has always been the decided favourite with the people of God. It was published in 1814. In a short time it passed through *three* large editions, and in 1826 a *fourth* edition was published, containing, in addition to the "Addresses," three Discourses upon subjects connected with the Lord's Supper. This fourth edition has been long out of print; and though the demand for another has continued, the family of the venerable Author have hesitated till now whether or not to yield. They have no wish to intrude the works of their revered relative upon the public, else

this *fifth* edition would have appeared long ago. They send it forth to the churches of Christ with less reluctance, from knowing that it was Dr Belfrage's own intention to do so, had not divine providence called him away to "rest from his labours." Some time before his death, he had carefully corrected for the press a copy of one of the former editions of this volume, and it is from that copy that this fifth edition is printed ; so that it has all the advantage of the Author's own last improvements.

This, perhaps the most popular of all his "works," now "*follows him* ;" and it is most earnestly desired that it may promote the glory of that Saviour whom he delighted to honour, and edify also his mystical body, whom it was his heart's fondest wish to cheer and strengthen in this vale of Baca. It is unnecessary to say one word in recommendation of a volume upon which the seal of approbation has so long been impressed. The Editor may be allowed merely to quote the valuable testimony of Professor Balmer, in his Essay on "the character of Dr Bel-

frage as an Author.”* “Limited as seems the range of topics suited to such Addresses, those of Dr B. are characterised by extraordinary variety and richness, and what was hardly to be expected in combination with these qualities, by great appropriateness. If the expressions may be allowed, they are redolent with love and salvation; they breathe the atmosphere of the Redeemer’s atoning ‘sufferings, and of the glory that followed,’ and are tinged at once with the ‘blood of his cross and the radiance of heaven.’”

The Editor may be excused for advertising to the change, which, since Dr Belfrage’s death, has generally taken place in the Secession Church, upon the mode of observing the Lord’s Supper. Dr Belfrage was strongly attached to the ordinary mode of distributing the elements to the communicants in succession, as one party after another approached and retired from the

* Life and Correspondence of the late Henry Belfrage, D.D., by the Rev. John M’Kerrow, Bridge of Teath, and the Rev. John Macfarlane of Glasgow,—p. 339.

tables. This method rendered it necessary that a series of addresses should be delivered ; and it was on such hallowed occasions as these, that the “ Addresses,” now published, were spoken. In many parts of the country, however, what is called “ simultaneous communion” is now the practice, and consequently, such addresses at the Lord’s Table are getting rarer and rarer. While many highly approve of the change, regret is very generally expressed, because of this diminution of sacramental bread. It seems, therefore, that this is an appropriate time for the republication of this volume. It will supply the lack of what was an ordinary, and unquestionably a most delightful and edifying branch of the communion service. If two or three of these Addresses be perused in the closet on a Sacramental Sabbath, either before or after communion, they must, by the blessing of God, contribute not a little to enkindle that devotion, and increase that solemnity, wherewith it becomes the Christian to encompass the altar of God.

The distance at which the Editor lives from the press, and the arduous and pressing duties consequent upon his having entered upon a new and interesting field of labour, form his apology for any typographical errors that may be discovered in this reprint. It is the desire of his heart, that the memory of his honoured friend and Father may be blessed more and more ; that the fervent prayers which Dr B. often presented in the Library at Rose Park, for the Divine blessing on this volume, may be graciously answered in the experience of all who may peruse it ; and that great grace may be upon all them that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth.

JOHN MACFARLANE.

GLASGOW, 1st *January* 1841.

SACRAMENTAL ADDRESSES

AND

MEDITATIONS.

ADDRESS I.

GENESIS xxii. 8.

“ My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.”

THESE words of Abraham strongly express his hope of the happy termination of his present trial, and that confidence in the mercy of heaven, which remained unshaken amidst all the apprehensions and struggles of nature. But as Abraham saw Christ's day afar off, we may consider this language as intimating also his expectation of the appearance of Him who should arise “ in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

“ Without the shedding of blood there could be no remission.” A victim was demanded, that on it justice might execute the vengeance written, and that the guilt of mortals might be expiated in its blood. This sacrifice man could not provide. The domains of kings could not furnish it, nor the wisdom of the schools say where it was to be found. “ Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a sin-offering.” In surveying the heathen world, we behold in every nation deities worshipped by sacrifices ; but while these prove the universal conviction of human guilt, and of the ne-

cessity of an atonement for it, reason is conscious that they are vain oblations. Such has too often been the nature of these offerings, that the heart shrinks from the view of them in pity and in horror. On such altars hope could not rest. The angels of heaven could not provide this sacrifice, and whatever their zeal for God, or their pity for man, might suggest, they were conscious that the obedience required, it was not in their power to give ; and that the sufferings demanded, they were unable to endure. And must man perish, because there is none to save ? All around is silence. It is the silence of despair.

But what voice is this which breaks the awful silence ? It cries, “ Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom.” It is his voice who provided what none else could provide,—a sufficient atonement for human guilt, and a pitying Saviour for human wretchedness. How astonishing is this, that he who was offended should provide the peace offering ! And what is it that he leads to the altar ? It is a lamb without spot or blemish. “ He makes him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” A venging justice grasps its flaming sword, and directs it to the heart of man’s generous substitute ; and as it descends, no voice from above cries, Stay now thine hand ; nor does its victim solicit either release or delay. “ He spares not his own Son, but delivers him up for us all.” The heavenly hosts beheld this scene with astonishment, and exclaimed, as they saw the delight of the Father expiring under his hands, “ How unsearchable are his judgments !”

Behold him, Christians, wounded for your transgressions, and bruised for your iniquities ; wounded till life expires, and bruised till his heart is broken. Your sins were in the load which crushed that heart, and had it not been that the punishment which they deserved was borne by him, they would have made you miserable for ever.

Christians, contemplate the victim that dies for you. See with what generous love, and with what patience of hope, he suffers for sin ! What are the qualities which the conduct of the sufferer most strikingly expresses ? Are they not submission to God, and pity for man ? His heart at last triumphs after being so long saddened by sorrow ; while joy, exulting in the perfection of his sacrifice, and faith anticipating its acceptance, brighten his countenance for a moment, and then leave it to the paleness of death. And now, when the memorials of this sacrifice, the evidences of its acceptance, and the seals of your interest in it, are put into your hands, the exercise of your hearts will, I trust, correspond with this language of the Apostle, “ We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS.

Many were the questions which were often and anxiously asked by the thoughtful mind, respecting the mode in which the offended Deity might be approached with acceptance. The agonizing sinner was willing to sacrifice his rams by thousands, and to pour forth his oil in streams, nay, to give the child of his hopes for the sin of the soul. “ But he hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.” In Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, you see this good, your chief good. Instead of asking from you rivers of oil, he gives you the water of life, and the wine of the kingdom ; and instead of demanding your first-born, “ He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life.”

If you feel that love to holiness which distinguishes all the disciples of Christ, you will wish your attention turned to the question which follows the discovery of the only atonement, “ What doth the Lord thy God require of thee ? ” It is this, “ to do justly, to love

mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." How powerfully are these lessons of duty enforced by the sacrifice of Christ ! Can you behold the justice of God demanding and receiving full satisfaction for sin, and imagine that it will connive at iniquity, or feel disposed to violate the rights of your brethren ? Can you behold the unspeakable gift, the brightest display of goodness, and be churlish, envious, and cruel ? Can you behold the awful majesty in which God appears as the Supreme Governor and Judge, and not learn to walk humbly with him ? He is your God ; but there is something in the kindness of this title, and in the tenderness of this relation, which represses the levity and the presumption of the heart.

" Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil it in the lusts thereof." When professors of religion become addicted to intemperance and impurity, it is seldom that they are brought to penitence and reformation. They live and die outcasts from the church which they have dishonoured, and objects of contempt even to their associates in vice. Cherish not one licentious thought or wish in your hearts ; and let the fear of God, and the consciousness of his presence, controul all the movements of the imagination and of the passions.

" Give alms," saith our Lord. " Provide for yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not." Your gifts of charity will excite the derision of the rapacious worldling. In his estimation, they are completely thrown away. But the alms by which you alleviate the miseries of the poor, and procure the means of instruction for the ignorant and the erring, are deposited in the treasury of heaven, and shall be returned into your bosom in blessings which shall never end ; while the gold of the miser shall be wrung from his grasp, and never shall meet his eye again, till the day when its canker shall witness against him, and when his money shall perish with him.

Go away from the table of your Lord, trusting in that delightful name which Abraham gave to the place where the trial of his faith terminated so happily, "The Lord will provide." Hath he provided this Lamb for a burnt-offering, and will he deny you ether the temporal or the spiritual supplies which your situation may require? Fear not that poverty shall make you unhappy, or subvert by its temptations the integrity of your hearts. The power of religious principle shall suppress the repinings of discontent, and lighten the heaviest toils of industry. The love of your Father can fill the poorest dwelling with the blessings of heaven, and adorn its inhabitants with the graces of superior goodness.

Think not that you shall never attain future happiness. "The Lamb is in the midst of the throne." Can you contemplate that glorious object, without feeling the assurance of hope, and the unconquerable energy of virtuous resolution. In the hour of death, when that question shall confound the wicked, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and whose shall all these things be which thou hast provided?" ye shall part without a sigh with this earth, and all your possessions in it, "as knowing in yourselves, that ye have in heaven a better and a more enduring substance." Trust continually in the love of God. His rebukes are the voice of love; his chastenings are the strokes of its hand, and it will reign to your eternal life, through the merits of Christ Jesus your Lord.

ADDRESS II.

GENESIS xxviii. 15.

“ Behold I am with thee, and I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land ; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

SUCH were the gracious words which God addressed to Jacob from the top of the ladder, which he beheld in the visions of the night. From the height of his sanctuary, Christians, God speaks thus to you, “ Behold, I am with you.” The presence of God in his ordinances, sheds comfort and glory through them. In his absence, they are like a palace deserted by the prince. In his presence, they are like a palace, where the prince displays his majesty, and dispenses his favours. In his absence, they are like a landscape, which the setting of the sun has covered with darkness, where no bird is heard, and no flower is seen. In his presence, they are like a landscape, over which the sun spreads life, beauty, and gladness.

My brethren, is God now with you ? Was his presence at his table, the object of your hope and desire ? Do you now feel its influence, in elevating your minds above the world, in confounding your spiritual enemies, in invigorating the graces of religion within you, and in filling you with the sweetest persuasion of his love ? “ Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Let wisdom improve his presence ; let repentance and purity remove every thing which might disgust him, or provoke him to leave you ; and let affection cleave to him, and refuse to let him go.

To the pious soul, cast down and disquieted, God now saith, “ Fear not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God.” These tears of penitence,

a look from my Son has drawn forth, and here I have "the garments of praise, to give thee for the spirit of heaviness."

But God declares, that he will do that which he has spoken to his people of. To you there are given exceeding great and precious promises. Many of these have been accomplished to you already, and not one of those which yet remain to be fulfilled can fail. Think on his promises of pardon and sanctification, comfort and support, direction and assistance. You have brought these with you to the communion table, and are now spreading them before him, saying, "Remember the word to thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope." "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord thy God maketh with thee." In these symbols of Christ's body and blood, we behold the promises sealed. We behold the most perfect demonstration, that "though heaven and earth should pass away, one jot or one tittle shall not pass from these, till all shall be fulfilled." Give up thy soul, O Christian, to the fullest reliance on the promises of God, and to the sweetest delight in the sure mercies of David. Far from that table, and from your hearts, be the language of distrust, "Fails his promise for ever?" I hear you exclaiming, "Faithful is he who hath promised, who also will do it." By his word I live, and on it I will die. The mountain may be removed from its place, and the rock crumble to dust; but "God, willing to shew to the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, hath confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"I will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." You are not, like Jacob, in the midst of a journey to a

strange land ; but you know not where providence may command you to bend your steps : but go where you may, the Lord is your keeper ; his protecting arm, his fatherly care, and his unremitting watchfulness, shall be with you. How safe will you be under such a Guardian,—a Guardian ever present,—a Guardian whose eye never slumbers, and whose arm is almighty,—a Guardian who can guide you through the dark wilderness, and animate you amid the languors of the weary land ! In the hour of temptation, he will keep you from falling ; and in the scene of solitude, you shall say, “ I am not alone, for the Father is with me.” In the place of danger, the eternal God shall be your refuge. He will keep your feet from the snare,—your bones, so that not one of them shall be broken,—your dwellings, so that no evil shall come nigh you,—and your hearts, that they may not turn away from him. Let the 121st Psalm be the companion of your journeys, and let it be the hope of your families, in a parent’s absence, and in the departure of friends.

But God says further, “ I will not leave thee.” Ah ! how often is this word spoken to mock credulity, and to disappoint the fond expectations of the simple and affectionate heart ! Riches say, “ I will not leave thee ;” but “ they make to themselves wings, and flee away as an eagle towards heaven.” Honours say, “ I will not leave thee ;” but they pass away like the glistening dew on the grass in the morning. Friends say, “ I will not leave thee ;” yet the suggestions of malice and caprice of temper often separate the most intimate associates ; and by the power of death, lover and companion may be put far from us, and our acquaintance into darkness. That hand hath felt affection’s last grasp ; these ears have heard its last farewell. But God will not leave you. His heart will not leave you ; “ my kindness shall not depart from thee.” His Spirit will not leave you, for “ the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.” His care, his peace, and his ministering

angels, will not leave you ; “for I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good.” And can you leave Him ? How intolerable the thought ! Not for all that the world can promise will we leave thee, even for one moment. We exhort you, with purpose of heart, to cleave to the Lord.

He will bring you to the promised land, however long he may delay your arrival, and whatever enemies may oppose it. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” He will send his angels, to carry your spirits to Abraham’s bosom. He will administer to you “an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” The body of Jacob was brought from Egypt to Canaan, but it was when the soul, whose affections would have made the gaze of the eye, and the tread of the foot on it so delightful, had left it to insensibility and corruption ; but your bodies shall be brought to inherit the kingdom of God, in conjunction with spirits, from which they shall not again be separated. If you should die under the said apprehension, that you are going to hell,—if you should imagine that the hand which grasps you, is dragging you away in your wickedness,—how unutterable will be the rapture with which you will find yourselves received into glory, and sing that song, “We went through fire and through water, yet thou broughtest us to a wealthy place !” We went through blackness, and darkness, and tempest, yet thou didst lead us to everlasting rest ! “Having these promises, dearly beloved, we beseech you to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Thy Spirit is good, lead me to the land of uprightness.” Amen.

ADDRESS III.

JOSHUA V. 13, 14.

“ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand ; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries ? And he said, Nay, but as captain of the Lord’s host am I now come.”

THE warrior who thus speaks, is, my Christian brethren, the Captain of your salvation. He is the Captain of the Lord’s host, by his Father’s appointment, “ Behold I have given him for a leader and commander of the people ;” and he hath the best title to this office, from his admirable wisdom, patience, and courage ; from the matchless victories he has gained, and from the unwearied care, with which he provides for the safety, the happiness, and the glory of his host.

The language of the profession you are now making, is,—“ we are Christ’s.” We belong to his chosen band, and we are come to his table, to swear that we will be faithful to the death. Have you quitted the camp of his enemies, with a firm determination never to return to it ? Have you joined yourselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love his name ? Is Christ’s law your delight ? Are poverty, reproach, labour, and pain, in his cause, far sweeter to you than all worldly happiness ? Is it your study to shew yourselves approved to him ? Is this the character you are most ambitious to attain, “ Good soldiers of Jesus Christ ?” Is this the reflection which you wish above all others to cheer your minds, as the failing eye looks back from a death-bed on the scenes of life, “ I have fought a good fight ?” If such are your feelings, if thus you have acted, I am authorized to say, that you belong to the Lord’s host.

You need not ask, with Joshua, "Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?" What he hath done in your cause, entitles you to say, I know God is for me; "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do to me." That drawn sword is reeking with the blood of your foes, and Jesus is saying, "See what I have done to save you!"

What is the impression which this scene, Christians, is making on your minds? Are your hearts laid low in reverence and adoration? Is this their language, "What saith my Lord to his servant?" Be thy injunctions ever so difficult, I will endeavour to execute them; and let them be ever so painful to flesh and blood, "I delight to do thy will, O my God." Hear what he commands; "Loose off thy shoe from thy foot, for the place where thou standest is holy." It is sanctified by the Redeemer's presence. "Holiness becometh thine house for ever." Cast away thy worldly anxieties and cares, and let the Redeemer have all thy thoughts, all thy affection, and all thy homage.

But I hear the broken voice of the trembling soul, saying, "The appearance of Christ is so majestic, that I am sinking with dismay;" yet to you it is the majesty of love. Could you read his heart, you would see it to be the heart of a friend; and even now, on his face you may discern pity's mildest gleam, and affection's sweetest smile. Mercy rejoicing over judgment marks his steps, and grace abounding waves on his banner. Desolation and misery attend not his progress; but charity with its fruits, and peace with its blessings. Is it your unfaithfulness to him in time past that afflicts you? He may take vengeance on your inventions, but he will have mercy upon your souls. Confess your folly at his feet, and to you he will say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace." To his foes he says, "O thou enemy, thy destructions are come to a perpetual end!" but to you he saith, "Eat, O friends! drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!"

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Here, O Christians, is a subject for your songs, in time and through eternity,—the conquering Saviour’s excellencies, victories, and love. With these all heaven will resound, and with these shall not your hearts and lips be filled? Nothing is so intimidating to your enemies as the song, “ The right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doth valiantly,” and nothing can be more animating to your own hearts. “ Happy art thou, O Israel! who is like unto thee? O people, saved by the Lord, who is the shield of thy help, and the sword of thine excellency, and thine enemies shall be found liars to thee, and thou shalt ride upon their high places.” In all his majesty, Christ is your honour; in all his victories, he is your triumph; in all his ways, he is your friend; and in all his salvation, he is your portion. No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, for he hath given you the shield of his salvation, and every tongue that riseth against you in judgment he will condemn. Having done so much for your cause on earth, he will not abandon it in heaven. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

Contemplating your Leader in his dyed garments, and in his glorious apparel, you will hate the garment that is spotted with the flesh, the spirit, and the cloak of maliciousness. He travels in the greatness of his strength, following up his victories, and deems not even the conflict, and the triumph of Calvary, sufficient for the shame of his foes, and for your honour; and shall you think that you have attained, or are already perfect? No; “ forgetting the things that are behind, and

reaching forward to the things that are before, press forward to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Does he speak in righteousness? "In simplicity and in godly sincerity, maintain your conversation in the world." The tongue of the just is as choice silver. Remember what you have said to Him at his table, and fulfil it: "I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot go back." Is he mighty to save? Save as he doth, you cannot: but you may be the ministers of happiness to the souls and bodies of men. By the cordial that recovers the exhausted frame, and by the watchful attentions of kindness and skill, you may redeem life from destruction. By your warnings and entreaties, your counsels and example, you may convert a sinner from the error of his ways, and thus save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins.

Let the honours of the Captain of salvation be dearer to you than your chief joy; and let this be the character of all who follow his standard; "they helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage." Intreat him to go forth conquering and to conquer, till the strongholds of darkness are levelled with the dust, and till the last enemy is destroyed. "Gird thy sword on thy thigh, O most mighty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, of meekness, and of righteousness." Rejoice that soon it shall be said to you, "The Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see no more for ever." At death you shall be set completely free from them. Sin you shall see no more, till that day when you shall behold it charged upon the wicked, and borne away with them to the place of torment. Devils ye shall behold no more till you see them driven away from the Conqueror's throne, as the associates of impenitent men in misery. At the great day, you shall see the earth and its works burnt up, the world and its fashion pass away, and death and hell cast into the lake of fire; but when you

behold the Captain of salvation coming from heaven in his glory, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation." It is not merely in the day of judgment, but through eternity, that he will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. Happy and glorious shall he be in you, and you in him. Your heads shall be crowned with everlasting glory, your hands shall wave the unfading palm, your hearts shall be sacred to eternal charity, and your lips devoted to songs ever new. Surely, such hopes as these must animate you in the conflicts of religion, arm you with fortitude in the hour of temptation, and make you willing to resist even unto blood, striving against sin. "Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Amen.

ADDRESS IV.

2 SAMUEL xviii. 33.

"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Few scenes are so melting to the heart, as a parent in tears over the ruin of his hopes; and he must be devoid of feeling, who can pass by him in such circumstances without a sigh of pity. But even such a scene, in point of deep interest, is not to be compared with that which you are now commemorating! The pathetic language of David was expressive only of his wish; and, had that wish been granted, his heart might have shrunk back.

It is easy to make light of death, when every pulse beats strong with health ; but to rejoice in the pangs that are terminating our existence, is an effort to which few are found equal. But did Jesus Christ satisfy himself with wishes to die in our stead, expressed in the language of passionate earnestness ? “ It is Christ that died.” He came to die for you, and for you he gives up the ghost.

Absalom’s conduct was marked by criminal excesses ; yet, though a profligate and a rebel, in the partial eye of a father he possessed some amiable qualities, which checked those sterner passions, which called for his destruction. But in the sight of God “ the heart of the sons of men is full of evil ; madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.”

Had David died for Absalom, he, as a good man, would have met his latter end in peace. The hope of his son’s amendment, the satisfaction which generous conduct inspires, and the prospect of eternal happiness in heaven, would have made the last struggle easy. But the death which Jesus endured was attended with excruciating pain of body and mind ; nor did one smile from heaven, or one token of compassion from the surrounding populace, mitigate the horrors of the dreadful scene, or soothe the soul which was encompassed with the sorrows of hell. Had Absalom lived, the generous affection of his father might perhaps have produced a reformation in his temper and conduct ; but it was possible that he might become seven-fold more the child of wrath than before : but those for whom Christ died “ are redeemed from all iniquity, and purified to himself, a peculiar people, zealous in good works.”

Absalom was David’s son. Five times does he mention this, in the broken language of sorrow. And, “ can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb ?” Can a father forget the son of his vows ? But we were the children of the devil, led captive by him at his will ; yet for us Christ died, and “ herein is love.”

I trust, Christians, that you are contemplating this scene with wonder and gratitude. I trust that you are saying of love that passeth knowledge, I see its evidence in sorrow to which no sorrow was ever like, and in blessings with which all the advantages of the world are not to be compared. I feel its influence in this crucified flesh, and in this soul that follows hard after Jesus. I have come to thy table, that, in partaking of the symbols of thy body and blood, I may taste that thou art gracious, and may raise at the foot of the cross the exclamation which suits that place above all others, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God!"

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Christians, satisfy not yourselves with mere wishes to serve your Redeemer. When we have it not in our power to do what the feelings dictate, it is good that it was in our heart to promote his glory. But let us never withhold our hand, while we are able to advance his cause. You often say in your hearts, Would to God that I could have ministered to him of my substance, as some of his favoured disciples did; but behold the representatives of our Lord in the helpless orphan, the mournful prisoner, the man oppressed with poverty, and the widow broken in heart. In relieving them, you minister to him. No motive to kindness is equal to this; this the Gospel alone exhibits. Your hearts often say, Would to God that I could have followed him from the garden, to his cross, and to his grave! but you may bear about with you in the body, the dying of the Lord Jesus; you wish that you could have praised him, with the heavenly host, but like them you may glorify him with your spirits; and, more than them, you can glorify him with your bodies, which are his.

Hath Christ died for you, and can you live to yourselves? What can be more ungrateful, more base, and

more preposterous than this? To whom ought you to live, but to him who died for you, and rose again? Who can contrast, even for one moment, selfishness and piety in their workings, without exclaiming, "To me to live shall be Christ!" Selfishness says, I will gratify my own wishes, but piety says, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? The language of selfishness is, Give, give, but that of piety is, Take all that thou seest necessary for the purposes of thy glory, though the most valued acquisition in my store, or the dearest comfort of my heart. Selfishness hath a hand so closed, that none can open it, but that of piety is ever ready to communicate. Selfishness may be constrained to promote the happiness of others, by that Providence which sent the ravens with bread and flesh to Elijah; but the pious heart yields its blessings with a cheerful promptitude; and if regret is felt, it is only that it hath not more to bestow.

Be on your guard against passionate wishes for death. These are sometimes dictated by peevishness and impatience. The children of Israel, when in want of water, fretted against Moses, and said, "Would to God we had died when our brethren died in the wilderness." But would you snatch the keys of hell and of death from Christ's hands? Hath he shewn himself unfit to use them, or unworthy to be entrusted with them? Will these keys be better placed in your own? Had you died sooner, your troubles might have been fewer, and your separation shorter from those whom you loved; but your virtuous attainments would have been less eminent, your crown less splendid, and your re-union perhaps less delightful.

Remember that you are not to die to yourselves, to consult merely your own comfort and safety in dying; but you must die for the church and for the Lord, by edifying those around you, and glorifying your Saviour by your final testimony, and by the vigorous exercise of that charity which never fails, and of that living, im-

mortal goodness, which, even in the valley of the shadow of death, springs up to eternal life.

Parents, take heed lest the reproaches of conscience mingle with the lamentations of nature over the graves of your children. Make every possible effort for their salvation ; then, should they die in early life, you will rejoice that they are in heaven before you. The most horrible pang which can wring a parent's heart, rises from the dread of a child's damnation. Let not the young forget the vows of this day, and do not, by your mingling with the carnal and the profane in their wicked practices, force upon your parents, when you are gone, the conviction, that their God hath cast you off for ever. The Redeemer now calls you to stedfastness in your profession, and to constancy in goodness, by this melting thought, that you shall soon die ; and that the idea of your happiness will preserve your parents from overwhelming sorrow, and the memory of your virtues be the soothing companion of their declining days. In fine, in your various situations, approve yourselves the devoted servants of Jesus. Thus living, and thus dying, ye shall be happy ; and thus living, and thus dying, ye shall be the Lord's. Amen.

ADDRESS V.

JOB xix. 25.

“ I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

SUCH was the language of Job's faith in the day of his distress. Though, to outward appearance, a spectacle of utter wretchedness, yet, in this delightful consciousness, he was happy. His children were gone, his

riches were lost, he was disfigured by corruption, and overwhelmed with sorrow ; yet in the living Redeemer he finds hope to his soul. Friendless and desolate on earth, his refuge and portion were on high.

Jesus is a Redeemer. This is his name and his memorial to all generations, and it is a name "which is as ointment poured forth." This is a character which millions on earth and in heaven ascribe to him. Though his religion hath lightened the sorrows of the prisoner, and improved the condition of oppressed nations, the title of a Redeemer leads us to consider him as a Deliverer from the yoke of Satan, and from the bondage of corruption. For this redemption, his blood flowed ; and his grace triumphs.

Your present appearance is a solemn profession that you are among the Lord's redeemed. But can you appeal to such evidence as this, as a proof that he is your Redeemer ?—I was the prisoner of Satan, I was inclosed in a dungeon dark and frightful, my heart was the seat of enmity, and my soul was the victim of despair. But he cut the bars of iron in sunder, the gates of brass were broken by his hand, and his voice said to me, "Go forth." Now I resist Satan's dictates, and abhor all his works. Once I was the slave of evil passions, and I was hurried by them into many criminal excesses. Pride and impurity, envy and revenge, assumed in succession the rule of my heart ; and while they promised me happiness, they rendered me of all men the most miserable. But, "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, made me free from the law of sin and death," and now I walk at liberty, under the influence of an ample charity, and an enlightened conscience. He hath said to me, in a voice which has awakened a gratitude that shall never die in my heart, and kindled an ardour in holiness, which no difficulties shall ever extinguish, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee ; I have called thee by my name, thou art mine."

But this Redeemer lives. How many deliverers,

famed in history and song, now sleep the prisoners of the grave ! How feeble is the idea, which the skill of the painter or the statuary can convey, of the lightning of that eye, which could rouse the timid to energy ; and of the might of that arm, which dragged oppressors from their thrones ! But the Redeemer of whom I speak, though he was once dead, is now alive for evermore. I know that he lives, from the hourly tokens of his care, and from his quickening influence on my drooping heart, for Christ lives in me. He ever lives to make intercession for us. Eternal beauty shines on his countenance, and everlasting mercy is the attribute of his heart. His is a life which knows no decay, and which ensures mine. " Would to God that I could use this language ! " is perhaps a wish expressed by some hearts before me : " but, alas ! the yoke of my transgression is bound by his hand ; they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck, he hath made my strength to fall ; the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up." My soul cleaveth to the dust, I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up. " Lift up your heads with joy, for behold your redemption draweth nigh." The Redeemer is come into the world, nay, he is come to this table, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. He is come, that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly. Be silent, then, ye complaining souls, or rather break forth into singing, " Hosannah to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord to save us. Hosannah in the highest."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

" Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people." " In whom we have redemption through his blood." " The Lord liveth,

blessed be my rock, and let the God of my salvation be exalted." Sing, O ye heavens, for ye are a purchased possession ; shout, ye lower parts of the earth ; on you the redemption was effected, and for your inhabitants it was obtained. Break forth into singing, ye young disciples, for the early visit his salvation has paid you. Lift up your voices, ye aged saints, for now is your complete salvation nearer than when you first believed. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Let my right hand forget its cunning, if it grasps another hope for eternity than that of the gospel ; and let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if it ceases to praise thee, O my Redeemer, and what thou hast done.

Beware of every thing that may mar your assurance. Think not that it will abide with you, whatever spirit you may cherish, and whatever course you may follow. Will his sun shine on you while you slumber and sleep ? Will he deck with beauty the crooked ways of apostacy ? The fellowship of his Spirit will not follow you to the society of the licentious, nor will the comforts of his love mingle with the pleasures of sin ? If you turn again to folly, dark clouds shall compass you, he will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, you shall feel his distracting terrors, and exclaim in the bitterness of your souls, " My strength and my hope are perished from the Lord." " Be not high-minded, but fear." Oh ! do not, for your own sakes, I beseech you, as well as for his, do not the abominable thing which his soul hates. The immoral enthusiast may talk of his visions and raptures ; but ye abhor the presumption of his spirit, and weep over a delusion, which causes the ways of God to be reproached.

By the circumspection, the zeal, and the modesty of true piety, your peace will be most effectually maintained. Truly, O Lord, I am thy servant, I am thy servant, and my whole life shall declare my devotedness to thee. Thou hast loosed my bands, but I have taken

thy yoke upon me ; and on earth and in heaven I will wear it as my glory.

Be not afraid of death. I say not that the fear of death is a proof that a person is a stranger to the grace of God, for " Christ came to deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." Some have a constitutional feebleness of spirit, and such an overwhelming sense of their transgressions, that the aspect of death, pale and ghastly, and his awful voice, " Prepare to meet thy God !" strike terror into the heart. But your Redeemer lives, and " your life is hid with Christ in God." The grave shall not be a prison, but a peaceful habitation, and a quiet resting place to you. Though to nature it seems a mansion cold, dark, and solitary, yet on it there is an inscription which makes the heart glad, the glory to rejoice, and the flesh to rest in hope ; " I will ransom thee from death, and from the power of the grave. O death, I will be thy plague ; O grave, I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." This blessed inscription remains clear and entire on the gravestones of the good, when time defaces the flatteries of grandeur, and crumbles into dust the marble on which they were recorded.

Have you lost the friends in whom you trusted ? placed the desire of your eyes in her coffin ? or laid the child of your hope in the grave ? Ah ! how my heart shrunk at the touch of that hand, whose grasp was the indication of confidence and affection, and at the sight of that ghastly face, whose features I so often saw illumined with cheerfulness and love ! But lift up your eyes to the throne of the Prince of life, and behold in that face, and in these robes, a pledge that " this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that this mortal shall put on immortality."

In fine, " Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies, and with your spirits, which are his," and let innocence guard and adorn every facul-

ty of both. Let active goodness fill up with its labours every moment of your lives ; and then, in your safety in death, and in your triumphant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour, shall these words be realised : “ Fear and dread shall fall upon them ; by the greatness of thine arm they shall be as still as a stone, till thy people pass over, O Lord ! till the people pass over whom thou hast purchased.”

ADDRESS VI.

PSALM iv. 6.

“ Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.”

Is this your wish, ye professed disciples of Jesus ? It is not the wish of the multitude ; their cry is, “ Who will shew us any good ? ” But I trust each of you feels, though this prayer may rise from no lips and no heart on earth but mine, and though, on account of it, I should be laughed at as a fool, or reproached as an enthusiast, I will say, Let worldly men seek and find their portion where they please ; my great wish, in which all others are absorbed, is this, “ God be merciful to me, and bless me, and cause his face to shine upon me.” But why is this your request, your earnest request ? Because the loving-kindness of God is better than life ; because without his favour I cannot be happy ; and if God be for me, none can be against me. Without this, the smiles of the world, the favour of princes, and the affection of friends, could not satisfy me. But with this, I would be supremely blessed, though neglected by the world, and deserted by every friend.

How liberal and benevolent is the spirit of piety ! While the saints wish for themselves the happiness that arises from the manifestations of the divine glory, and from the gifts of his love, they solicit this for all their fellow-worshippers. The favourites of earthly princes are jealous of those whom they think likely to supplant them in the sovereign's heart, and do what they can to remove them, or to counteract their influence ; but charity envieth not. If a sigh rises from the heart amid the delights of communion with God, it is prompted, not only by the consciousness of unworthiness, but by the generous pity which feels for the soul in darkness. Amidst the kindest language of their Father's lips, the voice of sorrow reaches their ear, " O that I knew where I might find Him ! " The love which passeth knowledge terminates on millions, yet to none of them is Christ's affection feeble, and to none of them is his heart cold. The light of his countenance is like that of the sun, of which my share is not the less that it shines on multitudes.

Now, communicants, the veil is drawn aside. Yonder is your God clothed in majesty ; yet from his face beams the softest lustre of love. " To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word." He has heard your prayer, " I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." The Lord is descending in a cloud ; but it is a bright white cloud. He passes not by you ; he stands still and proclaims his name, while your hearts feel the gracious and delightful import of every title, — " The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin." Never may these sounds forsake my ear. Behold, O my soul, the forgiveness which cancels all thy guilt, and the grace and the mercy which secure thy happiness for ever. Behold in this name thy Father's face, and thy Father's

heart ; and let thy whole soul exclaim, " My Lord and my God !"

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Reflect, Christians, on the desertion of your Lord, and how sad he was, when deprived of that which makes you so happy. The language of the favoured communicant is, God is with me, and he has brought the joys of heaven with him : That of the Saviour was, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" Had it not been for this desertion, I should never have seen the face of God but in wrath, and all my comforts flow from my Saviour's sorrow.

How astonishing is it, that to his people God should address such language as this : " Return, return, O Shulamite ; return, return, that we may look upon thee. O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice ; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely !" What is thy servant, O Lord, that thou shouldst look on such a dead dog as I am ? Behold, O God, our shield, and look on the face of thine anointed. O my God, I blush, and am ashamed to lift up my face to thee ; I am sinking in the dust, under the consciousness of my deformity and pollution. But never is the saint so lovely in the estimation of heaven, as when he covers his face with the wings of humility and reverence, abhors himself, and repents in dust and in ashes.

Divine manifestations have a transforming influence. " We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Like the rock which echoes back the sound, like the stream which reflects the sun that shines on it ; so does the good man, in his temper and conduct, exhibit, though it is imperfectly, the excellencies displayed before him.

All devout wishes after communion with God, are inseparably attended with strong desires after increase in holiness. "Make thy face to shine on thy servant, and teach me thy statutes." Moral excellence is never dearer to the heart, than while it contemplates the glory of God, as it shines in the face of Jesus.

"Turn thee unto me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted," was David's cry from the dark retreat of solitude and sorrow. God may soon place you in a scene, no longer enlivened by the society and the smiles of those you love. But what is the wish of the good in such circumstances? Is it not, O that thou wouldst restore to me the friends thou hast put far from me! O send them down from happiness, to terminate my sorrow! I cannot live without them. No, but I cannot live without thee! O, when wilt thou come unto me! In thy countenance I shall read affection's kindest expression, and from thy lips I shall hear the sweetest voice of love.

How soothing to the heart will be the light of God's countenance, when the face of a dying friend is gathering blackness! How sweet will it be, when God is changing your countenance, and sending you away! When you sorrow with regard to others, that you shall see their face no more; or they sorrow thus with regard to you; ye may rejoice in hope, "that in your flesh you shall see God, whom you shall behold for yourselves, although your reins be consumed within you." For you, the communion of the blessed is destined; and for you, the marriage supper of the Lamb is preparing. "They shall see his face, and his name shall be written on their foreheads." We dismiss you with the blessing of ancient Israel, and may you enjoy that presence and care of the Holy Trinity, which it so strikingly represents. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord be gracious to thee, and cause his face to shine on thee. The Lord lift up his countenance on thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

ADDRESS VII.

PSALM xxii. 14.

“ I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint ; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.”

SUCH was the language in which ancient prophecy exhibited the sufferings of Christ ; and it was realized in his bloody sweat in the garden, and in his bones starting from their places, when the cross was fixed in the ground, and when his body was suspended on it, by nails driven through his feet and extended arms. Behold him pouring out his soul unto death, and groaning under the wrath of his Father. At the anger of the Almighty, the mountains quake, the hills melt, and the earth is burnt up. But what is the quaking of the mountains, to the trembling of Christ's soul ? What the dissolving of the hills, to the melting of his heart ? And what the burning of the earth to the consuming of the Lamb of God ?

But was all this tremendous suffering necessary ? Yes, sin could have been expiated by no easier method. His blood must flow, and his heart must be broken. If Providence never demands from us one needless tear, it could not exact from our Surety more than was meet. A stream less copious could not have washed away our guilt, and a stroke less heavy could not have given that stream a sufficient vent from the rock that yields it. The wrath that melted his heart, and crushed him to the dust of death, was that which would have sunk us to the lowest hell, and would have brought on us the vengeance of eternal fire.

Admire the love of Jesus in submitting with such patience, and such cheerfulness, to all this suffering. His heart welcomes all his agony, and his conduct dis-

plays, not merely acquiescence, but generous alacrity in the whole scene. Not a word nor a gesture indicated that his resolution was failing, or that his love was decayed. His deadly sorrow abated not his compassion for our miseries ; and the death of the cross, in which the malice of his enemies went to its utmost pitch, was the brightest triumph of his love.

Was Christ poured out like water, and shall no tear of sorrow and love drop from our eyes ? Did his heart melt, and shall ours be cold, and dead as a stone ? Did his heart melt in the anguish of suffering, and shall not ours melt in penitence ? O blessed Jesus, thy melting heart reminds me of the hardness of mine ! At thy table, I present to thee my earnest supplications for thy softening grace. Precious in thy sight are the meltings of pious sensibility. “ O that my head were waters, and mine eyes fountains of tears ; that I might weep day and night,” for those sins for which thy generous heart was wounded !

Ye angels of light, what were your feelings, when ye saw his garments rolled in blood, whose goodness sends rivers of pleasure through the land of glory ? What were your feelings, when ye saw him bruised, even by his hand who had given you this charge over him, “ to keep him in all his ways, and to bear him up in your hands, lest he should dash his foot against a stone ” ? What are your feelings, when you see eyes weeping over the tale of fictitious sorrow, that never shed one tear over the Saviour’s woes ? What are your feelings, when you see indignation kindled against the oppressor of innocence in bosoms, where the sins are cherished which brought our Surety so low ? Behold in these, disciples of the cross, bowels yearning over a suffering Saviour ; and mark how they are washing his feet with their tears !

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

From the generous Saviour who suffered thus for you, what may you not expect? Will the blessings of his love be withheld? No; "I will pour water on the thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring." Will he be cold and insensible to your sorrows? No; "his heart is made of tenderness, his bowels melt with love." The blessing may be delayed; but he shall come to you as the former and as the latter rain. God may speak roughly to you; but this will soon give place to such language as the following: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I set thee as Admah, and make thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, and my repentings are kindled together." "For thee I delivered up my Son, and therefore thou art safe."

Can you withhold aught from him who gave up so much for you? Shall your hearts ever glow with impure desire? Or your virtuous resolution melt at the flattering blandishments of sensual pleasure? Look to your Saviour's broken body, and learn to subject all the appetites of yours to the controul of reason. Look to him poured out like water, and learn to present your bodies, living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service. "Look not at the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright; for in the end it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." How shocking is it, to behold those who had gone to the altar of God, running to the excess of riot; and to hear the whispers of envy, or language that wounds the ear of modesty, from those who have been listening to the Redeemer's wailings! Let your spirits be tender to the woes of others. When sorrow asks but the tribute of a tear, shall we refuse it? When it relates its moving tale, shall we shut up our

bowels of compassion? Let it not be said, that the followers of Christ have grace always in their lips, but never in their hearts; that the disciples of a frigid philosophy have hands more open, and dispositions more soft, than those of the cross; and that those that come from her snow-clad mountains, are more active friends of the unhappy, than those that come from Calvary. Remember, for your encouragement to sympathy and beneficence, "that the liberal soul shall be made fat; and that he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." To such a man, no eye is dry in sorrow, and no heart is closed.

In fine, this lamentation of Christ suggests to good men, comfort in disease and death. When a consumptive sweat shall burst through every pore of thy body—when a burning fever drinks up thy spirits—when thou art chastened in thy bones—and when thy heart and thy flesh fail, think of Him who was poured out like water—whose strength was dried like a potsherd—who endured extremity of pain—and who, though crucified in weakness, lives by the power of God. He knows the weight and the bitterness of affliction, and with entire confidence you may go to Him, who has felt the pangs of sorrow and the agonies of death. You may trust the assurance, that in all your affliction he will be afflicted; and that in your last struggle he will bear a part. "We must needs die, and be as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered again." Your hearts shall moulder into dust; corruption shall disunite the bones so wonderfully joined together, and scatter them about the grave's mouth; but lift up your eyes to heaven, and behold in Christ's glorified body and triumphing spirit, what the good shall be at the time of the restitution of all things. Bones that never ache, a heart that never sighs, and eyes that weep no more, shall be theirs. "There shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

ADDRESS VIII.

PSALM xlix. 8.

“ The redemption of their soul is precious.”

How great is the value of the soul to be redeemed ! Its capacities are noble. It is immortal ; and on its redemption it depends, whether it shall be happy or miserable for ever. The redemption of a nation from a tyrant's yoke, is deemed a great event. Genius, in its sublimest strains, and art in its costliest monuments, transmit the memory of it to distant ages ; but the salvation of one soul from hell, is a deliverance of infinitely higher importance. “ What is a man profited though he should gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul ? and what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? ”

“ The redemption of the soul is precious ; ” for nought that the universe could offer, would be accepted of as a price for it. The cattle upon a thousand hills would have bled, and the gold of a thousand treasuries would have been piled up, in vain. The blood of God's Son was its only price ; and for the soul's redemption that blood was shed. On Calvary this ransom was paid ; and in the salvation of the penitent malefactor, a pledge of its acceptance was given. “ God gave Egypt for his people's ransom of old, Ethiopia and Seba for them, because they were precious in his sight and honourable ; ” but in the redemption of man from sin, “ no mention shall be made of the gold of Sheba, the topaz of Ethiopia, or the fine linen of Egypt ; ” the sacrifice of his Son was alone sufficient for the mighty object.

“ The redemption of the soul is precious ; ” for in it the most important blessings are comprehended. From every pang to which they were liable, the elect of God are saved ; and to every enjoyment to which they can

rise through eternity, they have a title. The robes of glory are washed in the Redeemer's blood; and the crowns of life are placed by his hand. It is the ransomed of the Lord, who obtain joy and gladness; and it is at the Redeemer's mandate, that "sorrow and sighing flee away." From his everlasting merits flow their everlasting joys.

"The redemption of the soul is precious;" for the noblest agents are employed about it. Contemplate, O Christian, redemption, in the mercy, the purpose, and the appointment of the Father, the love, the obedience, and the sufferings of the Son, and in the promise and grace of the Spirit, and say if that can be a matter of trivial moment, in which such agents concur? O! astonishing redemption, in which I see the Father in his manifold wisdom, Jesus in love that passeth knowledge, and the Spirit in grace which defies all the power of hell to resist it, or to make it void. I might, in proof that "the redemption of the soul is precious," appeal to the groans of the lost, doomed never to share it; and to the songs of the blessed, who can find no strains too high to celebrate a Redeemer's worth, and the glory of salvation. Every era of the world hath its objects to applaud, and to cast into the shade the brilliant deeds of former generations; but the redemption of the soul shines with unfading lustre from age to age; and when the records of human glory shall have perished utterly, it will fill heaven with its wonders, immortals with its bliss, and eternity with its praise.

What think ye, Christians, of the redemption of the soul? To me it is so precious, that it gratifies all my wishes. To me it is so precious, that without it the universe could not make me happy. To me it is so precious, that I will magnify it for ever.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, and his

mercy endureth for ever. Who remembered you in your low estate, for his mercy endureth for ever. And redeemed you from the hand of your enemies, for his mercy endureth for ever." What wondrous love shines in that declaration of the Father, "I will give thee for salvation to the ends of the earth!" Let all that is within you be stirred up to bless the precious Saviour, who gave himself a ransom for all. What would have been our fate, had he been as reluctant to undertake the office of redeeming us, as Moses was to redeem Israel? Did he raise a single objection? Or did he yield his consent in a manner sullen and slow? He went with alacrity to the scene where he was to redeem, and there he stood. The pit sent forth its most malignant vapours to destroy him; the wrath of God was revealed from heaven against him; yet he failed not, till the prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive was delivered.

Let the melting remembrance of redeeming love, accompany you wherever you go, as the animating principle of every duty, and as a monitor to patience under every trial. Think of it when your soul becomes languid, in seasons when apostacy is frequent, amid the sleepless nights of pain, the bitter reflections of disappointment, and the base requitals of the ungrateful. Hath Christ done so much to redeem your souls from all iniquity, and will he see you defiling them with indifference? He expects that they shall be purified by faith, and elevated by devotion, guarded by temperance, and expanded by charity. The path of improvement in wisdom and goodness is now before you. In every step it will open new glories to the eye, and in all its windings the cross of your Lord is to be seen. With this in your view, can you turn aside to folly? To his dying shout, "It is finished," your hearts reply, let us go on to perfection. In this redemption, seek your happiness in all circumstances. By faith in it, contentment will sing in poverty, joy will exult in solitude, and hope

will triumph by the grave where sleep the chosen of our hearts, and where we ourselves will see corruption. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints. When visitors, in language cautious and reluctant, and when the face of friendship in despair, shall tell you there is no hope of deliverance to your failing flesh, ye shall rejoice in the Redeemer of your souls. Redemption stamps a value upon the vile body, and shall raise it from the worms to fashion it like to Christ's glorious body. In a short time ye shall join the happy society above, who are celebrating the honours of redemption in a sublimer manner than we can do here. "They sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Redemption will gather its trophies from every country under heaven ; and, in the wonderful varieties in the mode of its application, will display the power, the skill, and the patience of its Author. I do not say that redemption will occupy only the noblest songs of heaven. There are none there of which it is not the theme, and in which it is not the first and the last. Now, Christians, we dismiss you by applying to you the blessing of Joseph by Moses : "Blessed of the Lord be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, and for the precious fruits brought forth by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, and for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, and for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof, and for the good will of Him who dwelt in the bush." Blessed of the Lord be your souls ; by the purifying influences of Christ's blood ; by the comforts of the promises ; by grace and its victories ; by the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God ; by the doctrines and ordinances of the church, by the produce of Immanuel's land, and by the good will of Him whose

abode is in the contrite heart. Redeeming love comprehends all these in its designs ; redeeming blood contains them all in its purchase ; and to these the hopes of the redeemed may aspire. “ Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plentiful redemption ; and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”

ADDRESS IX.

PSALM cxxxix. 17, 18.

“ How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God ! How great is the sum of them ! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand ; when I awake, I am still with thee.”

IF Jehovah's purposes, with respect to David's creation, his deliverance from his enemies, and the stability and glory of his throne, were so precious to his heart, how highly would not he value the counsels of his God, with regard to his everlasting salvation ! Inexpressibly dear are these counsels to every pious mind. Precious to the affectionate heart are the thoughts of friendship ; but they may pass into neglect, contempt, and enmity. Precious to the ambitious man are the kind intentions of his prince ; but his breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. But, with respect to Jehovah's thoughts, infinite love suggests them, unerring wisdom directs them, absolute immutability establishes them, and almighty power carries them into execution. Precious are these thoughts to angels, for they are the objects of their study ; and shall they not be dear to me ? Precious to me, O God, is the

word that reveals these thoughts, the faith that relies on them, and the sacraments by which they are sealed. Precious to me are these thoughts, for in reflecting on them, my happiest hours are spent. Precious to me are these thoughts, for they are the consolation of poverty to me : “ I am poor and needy, but the Lord thinketh on me.” Precious are they to me, for they suggest the hope that animates me in the most painful services ; “ Think on me, O my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.” They are precious to me, for they gladden me when sleep departs from mine eyes ; and when others, in such circumstances, are tormented by the phantoms of superstition, or are occupied with the visions of pleasure or ambition, “ my soul is filled as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth praises thee with joyful lips, when I remember thee on my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches.” Precious are these thoughts to me ; for the morning light awakens me to reflect on them, and lends me its wings to soar after thee. Precious are thy thoughts to me ; for, engrossed with them, I feel no dreariness in solitude, and no terror in its loneliest wilds. Precious are they to me ; for, amid the most pleasing intercourse of social life, my soul rises to thee as its chief joy ; and while others around me are occupied in inquiring into the intrigues of statesmen, the plans of warriors, and the projects of men of business, I would rather spend one hour in affectionate adoration of the scheme of mercy, than be endowed with all the wisdom of the world. Precious, O God, to me are thy thoughts ; for, when death comes, this shall be my prayer, “ Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom !” I have laid up thy kind assurance as the consolation of my death-bed : “ I know the thoughts which I think on you, saith the Lord ; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” This shall encourage me to approach to thee, however dark and solitary the path may be. Precious are thy counsels to me ; for I wish to spend

eternity in their praise. Their depth shall be my wonder, their grace my song, and their fruits my happiness in heaven.

Have I expressed, Christians, the sentiments and the feelings of your hearts? "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" Lord, what am I that thou art mindful of me? Is the painful consciousness of your unworthiness, mingling with the raptures of devout astonishment? Recollect, that though God be high, he hath respect to the lowly, and that those joys are most pleasing to God, and yield the most lasting bliss to the heart, which are guarded by humbleness of mind. The Lord delights to see the tear of penitence in the eye that is gazing with holy wonder. Remember that it is in Christ that he regards you, and that it is for his merits that he takes such account of you. Are you happy that this is the case. Yes, it is my living, and shall be my dying wish, "that I may win Christ, and be found in him."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Can you say, Christians, with such pledges of love divine in your hands, "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me? Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, she may forget, but I will not forget thee; I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands," and the cross of my Son must be forgotten ere I forget thee. Fix your eyes on the broken body, and the shed blood of his Son, and you will exclaim, "We have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him!" Far from you be the insolence that charges God foolishly, the despondency which looks only to the dark side of objects and events, the fear that says, "I shall no more

see good." Cultivate the humility which says, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me!"—the faith that judges through the dark cloud, and the hope which rejoices that all shall be well.

Let the piety of your hearts form purposes for the advancement of your Saviour's glory. Such is the condescension and grace of God, that the good thoughts of his people, which are not carried into execution, shall not be unnoticed nor unrewarded. The pang which wrings the heart at the remembrance of sin, that says, O that I could recal the period when I yielded to temptation, that I might repel it with the energy of virtuous abhorrence; the glow which is kindled in the soul at the thought of Christ's love, and in which it consecrates its best possessions to his service; and the pity that sighs over human wretchedness, and would glory to carry the peace of religion to the house of mourning, and the light of salvation to the land of darkness, are known to him who searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts. From Him they shall receive a gracious acknowledgment, who said to David, "It is good that it was in thine heart to build a house to my name." "If there be a willing mind, it is accepted." It is not the man who dispersed abroad that shall be alone accounted charitable, nor shall he who built synagogues be alone deemed zealous for the Lord. For they shall be accepted who had the desire, though not the means, of performing these acts of piety and beneficence.

Cultivate thoughts of peace and kindness to each other. Thoughts of peace are God's happiness; let them be yours also. Angry and malignant passions raise a tempest in the soul; and who that hath seen happiness shaken and ruined by their fury, would wish to call them forth? But benevolence and charity are sweet as the sunshine, and refreshing as the falling dew. "Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the

fear of the Lord all the day long, for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." Their gourd is flourishing for the worm, and their glory is hastening to the land of forgetfulness.

We address to you the charge given to Daniel : " Go thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days ;" he that endureth to the end, and he only, shall be saved. Ye shall soon reach the city of habitations ; and then the wanderings of the wilderness, its solitude, its tempests and its privations, shall be forgotten ; or remembered to make the communion of the heavenly Jerusalem, its perpetual sunshine, and its fulness of joy, the more enrapturing. When Joseph's two sons were presented to his father, the old man said, " I had not thought to see thy face, and lo God hath shewed me thy seed." Similar to his will be the feelings of good men in heaven. I often thought it very doubtful if ever I should arrive at paradise, but thou hast brought me to a glory, and to a happiness, which it never entered into my heart to conceive. I thought I would be blessed indeed, if but admitted within its gates, and in the portion adjudged to one who was less than the least of all saints ; but thou hast set me among the princes of the people, and from the threshold where I wished to kneel, thou hast called me to thy throne. " Thy thoughts are not as my thoughts, nor thy ways as mine." Let pious contemplation be associated with active goodness. " Wherefore, gird up the loins of your minds, and be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that shall be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

ADDRESS X.

SONG iii. 4.

“ I found Him whom my soul loveth.”

How rapturous is the joy of those who have found the Messiah! What is the joy of the scholar in finding a satisfactory solution of difficulties which have long been the perplexity of the wise? What is the joy of the navigator in reaching, after a voyage of danger and toil, the shore of rest and safety? What is the joy of the merchantmen seeking goodly pearls, in discovering the pearl of great price, compared to yours, ye happy disciples of Jesus? Ye have found Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Ye have found Him, who is the consolation of earth, and the light, the glory, and the bliss of heaven. In speaking of his worth, no mention shall be made of aught that the world values, for the price of wisdom is far above rubies.

But as the most groundless pretensions have been made to communion with Jesus, it is proper to state some evidences of its reality, by which you may be able to determine whether your present feelings are merely the meltings of a passionate enthusiasm. If you have found Him whom your soul loves, you will abhor yourselves. The transports of the enthusiast are mingled with self-complacency, and with disdain of others. But when the excellence of Jesus is contemplated and felt, man loathes himself, and repents in dust and in ashes. Lord, thou art precious; I am vile: Thou art beauty; I am deformity: Thou art wisdom; I am folly: Thou art light; I am darkness: Thou art God's holy One; but I am the chief of sinners.

If you have found Jesus, your souls will burn with love. Lord Jesus, I am ashamed of this cold, dull,

dead heart of mine. It is for this that my tears are flowing in this scene of gladness. Oh that I had an angel's heart to love thee ! an angel's tongue to praise thee ! Not even an angel's heart, nor an angel's tongue, can do justice to thy matchless beauty, and to thy infinite grace.

If you have found Jesus, you will not be able to bear the idea of parting with him. One moment at thy feet, O my Saviour, one whisper of thy love, and one smile of thy face, are worth all that the earth contains ; and sooner would I part with the skill of my right hand, with light and with liberty, yea, with the vital blood of my heart, than forsake and renounce thee. I can see, in all the agonies of a sick-bed, in all the gloom of a dungeon, and in all the horrors of the grave, nothing so terrible to my heart as separation from thee ; and no hell, but this, would be necessary to make me completely wretched. When Christ said to Peter, " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me," he felt such horror at the thought of exclusion from his Lord, that he cried out, " Lord, wash not my feet only, but my hands and my head ! " Though I had the world in my possession, I would quit it without a sigh, and for ever, rather than part with thee. I cannot let go my hold of the hem of thy garment, and I cannot unloose the grasp by which I hold thee by the feet, and worship thee.

If this is your privilege, your feelings will be similar to those of Simeon, when, after waiting long for the consolation of Israel, he saw Christ presented in the temple. " Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation ! " I wish to see thy face without a veil, and to enjoy thy society without the fear of thy departure. If a glimpse be so delightful, what will seeing God face to face be ? If to taste that he is good, is so gratifying, what will it be " to be abundantly satisfied with the fulness of his house, and to drink of the

rivers of his pleasure?" If his touch makes the heart thrill with joy, what will it be when he shall "set us as a seal upon his arm," and place us by his side on his throne? Of this felicity, I trust you are now about to receive the earnest and the first fruits. "Eat, O friends! Drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved!"

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"O happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding!" How admirably do the words that follow this exclamation of Solomon represent your happiness in finding Christ! Have you little of this world? In Christ you have gain better than the merchandise of silver, and wealth superior to fine gold. In Him you may rejoice as one that finds great spoil. Are you sighing at the thought that the days of your pilgrimage shall be few, and that you shall not attain to the years of the life of your fathers? "Length of days is in wisdom's right hand." A tranquil old age is often the issue of religion, and the gray hairs of the pious she brings down in peace to the grave. But what though thy locks should never become gray with age, if the wind shall pass over thee while thou art green before the sun, if the worm shall claim thy cheek in its bloom? Immortal existence in heaven is thine. God shall command the blessing out of Zion on thee, "life that shall never end."

Are you poor and despised in the world? In Wisdom's left hand are riches and honours; the riches of heaven, and the honour which comes from God, the riches that no rust can corrupt, and the honour which no calumny can stain. Does the world seem bent on making you wretched? Does she assign for you a path, dark and solitary, steep and rugged, a path to which she sends no hand to bear you up, and no ray to direct, and no song to cheer? "Wisdom's ways are pleasant-

ness, and all her paths are peace." Is the gourd withered under which you sat with comfort? Are you in continual bondage through fear of death? "Wisdom is a tree of life to all that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord."

O happy disciples of Jesus! "his left hand is under your head, and his right hand doth embrace you." The light of his countenance is making all bright and glorious around you; and ye feel that the kingdom of God, is righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

But your finding Christ, not only awakes transport at present, but suggests the most animating hopes as to the future. You may safely conclude, that you shall obtain grace to help you in time of need; that you shall be found in him when you die; and that you shall find mercy of the Lord in the last day. Let not unbelief suggest, that your strength and your hope may perish from the Lord, for "none of them that trust in him shall be desolate." In the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength for you. Fear not that death shall separate you from him, for it shall find you in his arms, and leave you there. Fear not the flaming fire with which he comes to take vengeance; for the diligence shall not be in vain, which ye testify that you may be found of him in peace.

Ye disciples of Jesus, once more I congratulate you on your happiness; your bands are loosed, your sackcloth is taken away, and ye are girded with gladness. Instead of the cry, "O that I knew where I might find him!" I hear you saying, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Christ Jesus." Instead of the feelings of despondency and terror, this is your language, "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." You have met with a Friend, whose favour is better than life; with a Comforter, who hath wiped your eyes from tears;

with a Physician, who hath delivered your souls from death ; and with a Guide, who will preserve your feet from falling.

Provide for your Saviour's continuance. " Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you have found out a fit place for the Lord." " As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you ; continue ye in my love." Implore his stay, saying, Oh ! " be not as a stranger, or as a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry only for a night. We are called by thy name ; leave us not." Live as becomes those who enjoy a privilege so exalted. Let your hearts be filled with his love, your memories with his truths, your mouths with his praise, and your lives with his virtues. He will not abandon the heart where his love reigns ; and he will be our companion in the path in which his example is followed. His candle shall shine on the head where his judgments are stored ; and his blessing rest on the dwelling, where religion shines in the domestic virtues. Live as Christians ; then shall men take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus ; and heaven shall rejoice in you as his. And thus shall you triumph, " This God is my God for ever and ever ; he will be my guide even unto death."

ADDRESS XI.

ISAIAH xiv. 24.

" Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness."

" ENTER not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no flesh living be justified." Christians, have you those strong convictions of unworthiness and guilt, which these words display ? Have you a deep

persuasion, like the humble Psalmist, that if God should bring you into judgment, your condemnation would be certain and dreadful? Ah! what would my torn sacrifice, or my filthy rags, avail to screen me from the vengeance of a holy God! What is the sinner's due but death? What is the due of the chief of sinners, but the lowest hell? But, behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy; "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth." He gave to the law that holiness of nature, that obedience to its precepts, and that endurance of its penalty which it required from man. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake, he hath magnified the law, and made it honourable." This righteousness is revealed in the Gospel, and received by faith—received with the rapture with which the condemned criminal accepts a pardon, and received never to be relinquished. This is a righteousness which, in the most frightful tempest of wrath, shall, like a conductor to the lightning, ensure your safety by guiding it past you. This is a righteousness with which its happy possessor can go to the foot of Sinai, and behold unmoved its blackness and darkness. Amidst the strife of tongues, it will make peace rule in his heart. Confiding in its virtue, he can meet the horrors of death with calmness; yes, it will give him acceptance with the Judge of all at his coming. At that bar it will secure one no regard, that he was clothed in purple and scarlet; and subject another to no contempt, that poverty covered him with rags; but the man who submitted to the righteousness of God, shall on that day be arrayed in white raiment, and, however obscure his condition on earth was, his name shall be found in the book of life, and Jesus will confess it before his Father and before his angels.

"Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice; for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed." It is brought within the reach of the feeblest hand. Have you laid hold of it?

And are you suiting yourselves to its influence? I have no hope for eternity, but the hope which it inspires; I am not come to this table to vaunt of my own merits; to say, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are;" but to profess my entire reliance on, my infinite obligations to, that righteousness which is the testimony of prophets, and the glory of the law, the theme of the Gospel, and the impulse of morality; the confidence of all believers on earth, and the song of all the redeemed in heaven.

Ye perplexed souls, who dare not use the language of assured faith, is it your most earnest wish, Oh that this righteousness were mine! If I might but touch the hem of that garment, it would lighten my heart! Are you resolved to seek first, and above all other things, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness of it? Had I but this, I could say, Welcome poverty with its rags, and death with the judgment after it. Most righteously was the judgment by one to condemnation; but the free gift is of many offences to justification of life. In this way I am willing to take it.—If such are your feelings, it is yours.

Ye returning prodigals, who, in penitence and holy shame, have come back to your Father's house, who are saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; put me among thy hired servants." I desire neither the attire, nor the fare of a son. The servant's place, and garb, and office, are too high for me,—listen to what your indulgent Father is saying. Is it, depart from my presence? I cannot look on those who have disgraced my name, and wasted my bounties. No; "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." He thinks himself unworthy of the meanest raiment in my wardrobe; to him I assign the best robe. He will bless me for the crumbs that fall from my table; but "bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." My righteousness is near to come, and my

salvation to be revealed. May this be the happy moment of a joyful discovery of the one to your souls, and of a copious bestowal of the blessings of the other ! And let your whole hearts, at this solemn moment, go forth to Him, “ who, though he knew no sin, was made sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in the God of my salvation ; for he hath clothed me with the robe of righteousness ; he hath adorned me with the garments of salvation, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.” “ Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” Delightful to me is the sentence of justification ; but I feel it this moment peculiarly so, when my Surety’s lips pronounced it. I heard him say to his Father, “ their righteousness is of me.” When I called him the Lord my righteousness, I saw his complacency in the title in the light of his countenance. There is no robe to me like his righteousness ; and I value it as the gift of my best friend. He said not to me, “ Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on the wedding garment ?” Had I heard this from his lips, I would have died with the horror of it at his table ; but this was his language, “ Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass away from thee, and I have clothed thee with change of raiment.”

Guard against every rising of a self-righteous spirit. When you have felt a high degree of ardour in duty, when you have gained a victory over some violent passion, and when your conduct has received the world’s applause, let not your hearts be lifted up within you, neither put confidence in the flesh. Know ye not that pride goeth before destruction, and that by nothing is your Lord wounded more deeply, than by the vain glory

which trusts in itself as righteous. Put on humbleness of mind ; and in all your services let this be felt, “ Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” Give no reason to others to suspect that your expressions of self-abhorrence are insincere. It has been sometimes said, and with too much reason, that the strongest language of self-abasement has been used, that men might be gratified by the flattery which stated a conviction of its injustice. How despicable is such conduct to men of discernment, and how odious in the sight of God !

Be diligent, and zealous in good works. By the prudence of your discourse, the sobriety of your wishes, the ardour of your obedience, the circumspection of your conduct, and your constancy in goodness, wisdom will be justified of her children. The most dangerous enemies to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, are those who contend zealously for it, but are immoral in their lives ; who talk of Christ’s magnifying the law, yet habitually violate its precepts ; who listen with eagerness when justification is illustrated, but turn away their ears from the voice that preaches the holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord ; who continue in sin, that grace may abound. Dost thou imagine, O vain man, that the soundness of thy creed will atone for the wickedness of thy life ? or, that Jesus will be indulgent to those who habitually violate that law, which he lived and died to fulfil ?

Increase in faith, even in that faith by which the just shall live. Let faith contemplate the righteousness of Christ with increasing earnestness, and cling to it with greater firmness than ever.

If, Christians, you have righteousness in the Lord, what can you want which he will not bestow ? Can the righteousness that delivers you from hell, leave you to perish in your affliction ? Can the righteousness which entitles you to heaven, leave you without a claim to any outward comfort ? Whom he justifies, to them he also gives grace and glory ; and from them

he will withhold no good thing. He who hath procured your acceptance in heaven, will bring forth, even from the darkest clouds of suspicion and calumny, your judgment as the noon-day. He shall stand at the right hand of the poor, when every friend is gone, to save him from the man that would condemn his soul.

Anticipate that scene of happiness which John describes, and of which your present entertainment is a pledge. For both, there is but one garment. The marriage-supper of the Lamb is prepared, where redeeming love shall bestow the sweetest of its blessings, and to it you shall walk with Christ in white, satisfied with his likeness, and shining in his glory. There you shall sit down, and there shall your happiness and your salvation be made perfect. He hath justified you by his grace, that you might be heirs of eternal life. "If by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

ADDRESS XII.

ISAIAH liii. 6.

"All we like sheep had gone astray, we had turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

BEHOLD in this passage, Christians, the ruin and the redemption of man, exhibited in the most affecting light! How are your hearts influenced by this view of man's guilt and misery? It is easy to admit the doctrine of human depravity in general; but to feel

our share in it, and to say, from deep conviction, I have gone astray like a lost sheep, is a more difficult and rare attainment. We have forsaken the law of our God; renounced the guidance and controul of our Maker; and followed the impulse of principles and passions, whose only object is to hurry us to destruction. "We have loved strangers, and after them we have gone." "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this. My people have committed two great evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and have hewn out to themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water." Regardless of the approbation of their Maker, some are pursuing human applause; others, unmindful of eternity, are occupied with the interests of this passing scene; while many, as if they had no immortal spirit within them, whose powers they were bound to cultivate, and whose happiness they ought to seek, aim only to decorate and to gratify bodies, which shall soon be the spoil of worms.

And shall these wanderers be brought back? They cannot recover themselves; for "they harden their necks, and they refuse to return." And no created power can conquer that obstinacy, or turn them from the influence of Satan to God. But behold the device of infinite wisdom, and the triumph of infinite abounding mercy. The guilt of our apostacy is imputed to our generous Surety; and those influences of the Spirit are procured by his sufferings, which draw the heart to God with cords of love.

Behold Jesus suffering for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God! "He bears our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, might live to righteousness." In the expression, "The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all," there is an allusion to the solemn ceremony, observed by divine appointment among the Israelites: "And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the

children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities, into a land not inhabited." Behold the Almighty placing the immense load of your guilt on the head and heart of your generous Surety ! And did he shrink from this load ? No ; he welcomed it most cheerfully, and was willing to be crushed to the dust of death, that he might give rest to the weary and the heavy laden.

In this passage, there may be an allusion to the meeting of a number of streams in one vast cataract. All the floods of sorrow met in one torrent. Deep called unto deep at the noise of God's water spouts, and dashed down their waters in all their violence on the Saviour. How stunning the noise, and how impetuous the fury of the angry flood ! It was a flood which, if it had not been thus directed, would have swept us away into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

Now, Christians, are your hearts directed in grateful emotion to the atoning Saviour ? Have ye, under the attracting influence of the cross of Christ, forsaken your own ways, and your doings which have not been good ; and are you come to the table of Jesus, to vow to Him, that as you have done iniquity, you will do so no more ? May I address you in the language of the Apostle Peter, " Ye were as sheep who had gone astray ; but ye are now returned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls ? " Is there no vice to which your hearts now cleave, and no idol which you have not renounced for him ? Trusting that Jesus is your all, I call you to present yourselves living sacrifices to that good Shepherd, who gave his life for the sheep.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ THE Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.” And how did he restore your souls? He went after me in my wanderings till he found me; he laid me on his shoulders; yea, he placed me in his bosom, and brought me home rejoicing. “ Ye were for some time afar off, but ye are brought nigh by the blood of Jesus.” And thus brought nigh, shall you ever go astray? Remembering the perils and the wants, the worm-wood and the gall, the affliction and the misery of the waste howling wilderness, we exhort you to abide in Christ, and to continue in his goodness. Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering; and listen not for one moment, to the sophistry which would enfeeble the energy, or lull the watchfulness of virtue.

Bear cheerfully whatever burden thy Lord imposes. “ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.” What is thy burden to the load which Christ bore for thee? And who lays it on thee? It is no merciless tyrant, or hard master; but one who “ will not break the bruised reed, and who doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth.” The hand that lays on thy burden will lighten it; he will not suffer thee to be tempted above what thou art able to bear; and he will remove it at the proper season. “ Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.” There is not a sorrow in thy lot more than is necessary; nor could an hour have been taken from thy months of vanity, without injury to thy best interests. Wait with patience for the end of the Lord, and say not, the time to favour me will never come. Hast thou never

seen the smile restored to the mourner's face? And hast thou never listened to the songs of deliverance?

Think with astonishment, ye disciples of Jesus, on his language to you, with regard to the afflictions of life: "Peace be with you, and let all your wants lie upon me." "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." He did not say, Can I forget what I have borne for them already; or can love demand additional displays of pity and kindness? How different was his language! and how unwearied his grace! You know how Moses expostulated with God respecting Israel, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant, that thou layest the burden of all this people upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them? that thou shouldst say to me, carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers." But hear the gracious promise of your Saviour: "He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and will gently lead those that are with young. Even to your old age I am he, and even to hoar hairs will I carry you. I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry and will deliver you." Neglected worth attracts his most watchful care, and unregarded sorrow his tenderest compassion. He will not suffer the feeble lamb to perish on the cold and barren heath, nor the tottering frame to stumble and fall; he delights to cherish infant goodness in his bosom; and it is there that he wishes aged piety to sink into its last sleep.

Rejoice, Christians, in the honours now paid to your Redeemer. Of his God you may say, "Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him. Thou hast made him most blessed for ever." On his head there are also many crowns, placed there by the hand of adoring gratitude. The government of the universe, and the key of the house of David, are laid upon his shoulders. "And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his Father's house; the offspring and the issue, all vessels

of small quantity, from the vessels of cups to the vessels of flagons." As you have seen him on his cross, so shall you see him on his throne; and as you have had fellowship with him in his sufferings, so shall you reign with him. "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Then shall you ascribe your glory and your happiness to Him, who laid your help on one that was mighty, and to Him who bore your sins, and carried your sorrows, saying with one accord, "Salvation to our God, that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever."

ADDRESS XIII.

ISAIAH liii. 11.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied."

JESUS, as the man of sorrows, is an object which you are often called to contemplate. No object can be conceived which is more adapted to impress your hearts with his love, and to form you to penitence, to submission, and to active goodness. Ye feel its influence, while you behold the shadows of death resting on his eye-lids, and the sorrows of death raging in his heart. But in these words of the prophet, you are invited to view him rejoicing in the issue of his labours and sufferings. We behold in the Saviour the transformation which his mercy produces in his people, "Beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." In this joy you have the deepest interest; for it is produced by the prospect

of our happiness, and is worthy of Him whose character is love.

The travail of Messiah's soul, is a phrase which expresses the fruit of his sufferings in the conversion and salvation of men. That the conversion and salvation of multitudes were to result from his sufferings, is frequently asserted in Scripture. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." To human view, the death of Christ seemed the extinction of his cause. The multitude that once seemed attached to him, were instant with loud voices that he should be crucified. "Even his chosen followers forsook him and fled;" and some of them exhibited indications of ingratitude and perfidy still more base. The enemies of Jesus considered his fame as utterly blasted, and all his prospects of support and extension to his cause, as having for ever passed away. They imagined, that if his name was spoken of in future ages, it would be as that of a daring impostor, whom vengeance suffered not to live, and the enthusiasm of whose followers died at the cross of their Master. But how much were they mistaken! The blood of the cross was the dew of his youth, and the Saviour's death was the life of the world. He who complained, "I have stretched out my hands all the day long, to a disobedient and gainsaying people," and who wept over the obstinacy of an impenitent city, now extends his arms to embrace the crowds that are flocking to his side; and his heart swells with exultation, as he beholds multitudes turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

Men seldom live to see the result of their schemes and labours, and the seed sown by them often springs not up till they are dust. But Jesus is alive for evermore. The prosperity of his cause finds not him in his grave, as success hath often found the leaders of parties among men. "Yea, he shall live, and there shall be given him of the gold of Sheba. Men shall

be blessed in Him, and all nations shall call him blessed."

This result of our Lord's sufferings yields him the sweetest delight. Many who have found their plans successful, have not felt that happiness in the result which they had anticipated. Envy, malice, and fear, mar the successes of ambition, and a deadly venom hath been found in the overflowing cup. Providence has ordained, that the worldly man shall spend his money for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth not. But from what we know of the heart of Jesus, we are certain that this issue of his sufferings must be highly gratifying to him. Divine benevolence reigns in his soul, and to communicate happiness, was the work of his humiliation, and it is the glory of his throne. "He delighteth in mercy." The destructions of judgment are his burden, but the submission of the heart is his honour, and the salvation of the lost is his triumph.

This is the satisfaction of the purest benevolence. Too often is the pleasure felt by men in the success of their plans, that of the most malignant selfishness, but Jesus is satisfied that his chosen are happy. He rejoices in the discomfiture of the devil, because the prey is taken from the mighty; in the conversion of his people, because then the miserable obtain rest; in their praises, because they are a proof of their cheerfulness; and in their obedience, because the work of righteousness is to them peace, and the effects of righteousness are quietness and assurance for ever. It is true that his own glory shines in their salvation, but this detracts not from the lustre of his love. It leads us to admire that wisdom, which, in shewing the exceeding riches of grace, glorifies him to whom all honour in heaven and in earth is due.

How sweet is this satisfaction of the Saviour! The satisfaction that any event yields, is generally proportioned in degree to the principle which is gratified by it. The happiness felt by the good in visiting and relieving

the distressed, corresponds to the power of their benevolence. Some have declared, that the hour in which they made a fellow-creature happy, was the most joyous of their lives. But who can estimate the strength of the Saviour's love? Yet this we must know, ere we can form a full idea of the degree of his satisfaction. Think not that the expression of the prophet is one which indicates a pleasure that is feeble and limited. Men often speak in terms of extravagance of their pleasures, and the language of rapture has been used, when the heart has felt little gratification: but the words of Scripture are those of truth and soberness; and what it ascribes to the Saviour, must be in its nature and degree suited to the perfection of his character. If his heart is satisfied, it must be with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This satisfaction is one of the chief ingredients in our Lord's reward. The praises of the redeemed, are the sweetest music of his temple. If the happiness which a good man communicates to a single individual is so sweet to him, what must not Christ feel in the bliss of the nations of them that are saved? Human beneficence cannot give complete felicity, it is limited to a few of our wants and miseries; but Jesus blesses with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, and enjoys all the satisfaction which can arise from filling us with all the fulness of God.

Christians, what think ye of the spirit and character of Jesus? No spirit was ever so generous, and no character was ever decked with such attracting lustre as his. In his counsels, he plans our happiness; in his predictions, he anticipates it; in his sermons, he points out the way to it; in his sufferings, he bled and died to procure it; and in his glory, he bestows and enjoys it. The man who has no admiration of Christ, and no affection to him, must renounce all claim to just perception, and to grateful sensibility. "Thou best friend of man, who didst yield thy soul to such anguish on earth, and givest it to such solicitude in heaven for my salva-

tion ! I will learn to love thee better this day at thy cross, and at thy throne." The happiness and improvement which his people should derive from the sacrament of the Supper, were foreseen by our Lord when he instituted this ordinance, with affectionate satisfaction ; and when he now views you at his table, may the words of the prophet Zephaniah be fulfilled, " the Lord thy God shall rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will rejoice over thee with singing."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

The sufferings which you are now contemplating, must convince you that the satisfaction felt by our Lord in their issue was fully merited. This language can be applied to no joy but his. Even the pleasure felt by good men in their labours of love, is to be ascribed to the indulgent goodness of Him, who, in his grace, bestows what cannot be claimed from his justice. But nothing can be more fit, than that He who died for the salvation of men, should live to bestow it ; and that He whose heart was broken by the bitterest sorrows of charity, should be gratified by the sweetest joys of benevolence. What can be more fit, than that He should go forth conquering and to conquer, who, for our sakes, was led to death as a criminal and a slave ? What can be more fit, than that He who did and suffered so much to seek and to save the lost, should bring them home to his Father's house rejoicing ? What can be more fit, than that eternal life should yield all its pleasures to Him, who, in generous anguish, poured out his soul unto death ? In this world we hear the voice of gladness from many a quarter, from which, if God entered into judgment with its inhabitants, lamentation and mourning would issue. In the happiness of the good in heaven, we see grace triumphant ; but in the joys of the Redeemer, we behold the due reward of his wondrous

love. To the blessings which come on his head, and to the rapture which swells in his heart, justice attests his fullest claims !

Rejoice, Christians, that this benevolent satisfaction of your Redeemer is constant and perpetual. The satisfaction of earthly success is often short-lived. The most exquisite delights soon pall on the taste ; and languor and disgust are visible on the countenance where pleasure shed its fairest radiance. The greater the pleasure which is felt by men in their success is, it is the more transient. The tranquil joys of contented obscurity remain fresh and pleasing, while the raptures of blazing ambition and gay amusement have sunk into weariness and loathing. But never can Jesus be inattentive to the homage, or indifferent to the happiness of the pious. His affection is not subject to the variations of human caprice, nor his joys to worldly instability. The pleasure which he takes in the first emotions of serious concern in the soul, cannot be withheld from advancing wisdom and piety. This satisfaction of our Lord must be viewed as increasing as the triumphs of his cross are extended ; and how sublime will it not be, when he shall present his whole church to the Father, a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle, or any such thing ! Joy inconceivable will shine in his countenance and swell in his heart, when he places them on his right hand, saying, “ Behold I and the children whom thou hast given me.” His love in heaven will be displayed in enjoying the happiness which it hath bestowed. His satisfaction will be lasting as the bliss of his redeemed, and infinitely sweeter, from his nobler capacities, and from the influence of the principle so beautifully stated, and so deeply felt by himself,—“ It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Let the truths on which your minds have been fixed, teach you diligence in duty, and circumspection in conduct. Herein is my Father glorified, and herein doth my satisfaction abound, in that ye bring forth much

fruit ; so shall ye also be my disciples. With such a thought as this present to our minds, we cannot have one feeling of languor, or one moment of indolence in the work of the Lord. What is the pleasure a teacher takes in the proficiency of his pupils, or the excellent parent in the accomplishments of a child, to our Lord's delight in his saints' improvement in wisdom and in goodness ? And shall we mar that satisfaction, by our turning again to folly ? Would we wish to kindle regret and disappointment in that generous heart ? " Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye are sealed to the day of redemption. Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Christians, your Lord is now calling you to benevolent exertion, and to seek your happiness in its fruits. Let us do good to the bodies and to the souls of men as we have opportunity. How unlike to a Master delighting in mercy, are disciples cold and selfish ! Let us not complain of any anxiety, or labour, or pain, to which beneficence may subject us. " They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Ye who weep with them that weep, you shall see the fruits of your sympathizing sorrow and tender care, in the resignation and tranquillity of those to whom you minister. Ye parents, the lessons and entreaties, the anxieties and tears, by which you labour to win your children to goodness, shall not be in vain in the Lord. Ye ministers of Jesus, who travail, as in birth, till Christ be formed in the souls of your people, ye shall save your own souls, and them that hear you. Or, if Israel be not gathered, you shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord shall be your strength. How exquisite will be the rapture felt by the beneficent, when the objects of their bounty shall receive them into everlasting habitations ; which pious parents will feel when their children shall arise and call them blessed ; and which shall reward the toils of faithful ministers, when their people are their rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus ! " For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of re-

joicing ; are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming ? For ye are our glory and joy."

ADDRESS XIV.

LAMENTATIONS i. 12.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by ? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."

THE day which you are now commemorating, ye friends of Jesus, was indeed the day of God's fierce anger ; his fierce anger against sin, and against his Anointed, to whom it was imputed. Had it not been for this day, no salvation would ever have dawned on you ; nor would the Gospel ever have proclaimed, "Peace on earth, good will to men." It was the day of God's richest grace to us. "Herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." What an astonishing contemplation is God's fiercest anger against the Son of his bosom, and his kindest love to guilty and polluted mortals ! How often doth he turn away his anger from us ! "never does he stir up all his wrath, for he remembers that we are flesh, a wind that passeth away, and returneth not again ;" but on the Saviour, his vengeance rested till reconciliation was made for iniquity, and a refuge was opened for every contrite heart.

In this day of his fierce anger, the Lord afflicted his Anointed. If man can create such pain and sorrow

when he punishes, what cannot that arm produce, the thunders of whose power none can understand? Cavillers have represented the afflicting of innocence as inconsistent with the justice of God; they have lavished on this doctrine the harshest epithets, and have maintained, that though misguided and ferocious mortals have punished the unoffending, in the procedure of Jehovah pain is inflicted only on the guilty. But, in consequence of our Saviour's generous substitution of himself in our place, it was a righteous thing with God to bruise him; and he to whom the sins of his people were imputed, must bear their doom.

The sorrow which the anger of God produced is unparalleled on earth. In sickness, there is no pang; in destitution, there are no horrors; in fear, there is no agony; and in remorse, there is no anguish like it; nor can it be equalled in hell. There, every one bears his own burden; but Christ endured the misery due to all his own. The wrath distributed in all these vials was collected into his cup. In hell, impatience writhes, and impiety blasphemes; but in the garden, and on the cross, how meek and resigned is the Sufferer! In his demeanour, we see the strongest indications of resignation and love divine, amidst all the effects of agonizing sorrow. Christ raises his eye in hope to the black cloud, from which God's fury was rushing down; and intreats him to be merciful to those who are showing him none. His heart breaks, but his faith is unshaken; and, "my God, my God!" was the language of Jesus while made a curse for us.

Such, Christians, were his sorrows; but were they not yours? They were my sorrows, cry the spirits of the just. They were my sorrows, is the voice which I hear echoed back from the communion table. "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;" the griefs which we deserved to have borne, and the sorrows which we deserved to have carried. Is this nothing to you? Is there one even in this house, in whom the

Saviour's sorrows excite no interest? Can there be such a person at his table? During Christ's sufferings, many of the spectators were not only unconcerned about his sorrows, but there were numbers who, when they passed by, reviled him, "wagging their heads, and saying, If thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross, and we will believe on thee." Yea, during his agony in the garden, his three companions thrice fell asleep; and while their Master struggled, they were sunk in slumber. But, Christians, your hearts are strongly affected, and you can appeal to the pious emotions of your souls! Ye say, O my Saviour, let this throbbing heart, and these falling tears, bear witness how much I am impressed, and how deeply I feel the generosity of thy love. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth. Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that no object interests me like the Saviour in sorrow; and that my chief joy is, that he is now blessed above all.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that though he was supremely blessed, yet for our sakes he became a man of sorrows, that we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us. The Lord had mercy on me, said Paul, in preserving a dear friend, lest I should have had sorrow upon sorrow; but no such mercy was shewn to your Redeemer, nor could be shewn, consistently with his character and work as Mediator.

If there never was any sorrow like your Lord's sorrow, should there be any gratitude, praise, and love like yours? Ye angels of light, shall ye always exceed us in your admiration and love? Your connection with him is more distant, and your obligations are fewer than ours; but how ardent are your hearts, and, ah! how

cold is mine ! How lofty are your praises, yet how grovelling are mine ! Let such divine influence be imparted, that my faith may grow exceedingly, and that my love may be more abundant. And shall you not serve him for ever, who sorrowed to death for you ? All the affection this heart can feel, all the praise this tongue can express, and all the service this life can pay, ought to be thine, and shall be thine.

Let the agony of your Lord strengthen your abhorrence of sin. The sorrow of Christ shews you the horrors it deserves. Whatever enjoyment it promises, whatever appearances it puts on, and whatever argument it urges, you will find an antidote to them in this scene of anguish. Sin gave my Saviour killing sorrow, and can it give me enjoyment ? It came to him in its undisguised deformity, and its appearance to me is but a fair show. Its flatteries and pleadings may be sweet and soft ; but while I hear my Saviour's groans, and their sound shall never leave me, I cannot listen to aught it has to say. The feet which have carried me to Gethsemane, shall never bear me to the chamber of vicious indulgence ; nor shall the heart that has melted in holy love, be again inflamed by malice and envy.

Ye who are now happy in the enjoyments of religion, let the sorrows of our Lord teach you to value your felicity. These fruits, which are so sweet to your taste, grew in Gethsemane's garden ; and the plants that produced them were watered with the blood which was shed there. Seek not for the pleasures of the world ; and think not its favourites happy. You see their eye in its lustre, and their cheek in its bloom ; but you see not the sunk eye and the wan cheek of premature decay. Be kind and sympathising to those who are in sorrow, and let not prosperity make your language disdainful, nor your demeanour cold. The time may come, when you will occupy their place in the dust, and they yours on the mount with God.

Sorrow must needs come ; “ but in your patience pos-

sess ye your souls." Look to the garden and the cross, to maintain your acquaintance. When God's wrath lies hard on you, and he afflicts you with all his waves; when the carelessness or the treachery of your friends shall leave you solitary in affliction; when iniquities shall prevail against you, and Satan shall threaten to devour you; when you can see nought of God but his frowns, and feel nought from him but his strokes; remember the sorrows of your Lord, to teach you patience, and to encourage you to hope. The love and sympathy of that heart cannot be cold, which submitted to such unparalleled sorrow! The degree of his sorrow demonstrates the height and depth of his love. The consolation of God cannot be small with you, for the Saviour suffered unmitigated anguish, that your comforts might abound! It is not his sorrow, but his peace, which Christ hath bequeathed to his disciples, and ye shall experience, in your troubles, what he felt not in his. "Amid the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul." Your sun shall break through the darkest cloud, and your midnight horrors shall be as the noon-day.

Should you suffer, ye followers of Christ, and should you die in darkness, how blest will your surprise be when you shall meet your Saviour, and hear him thus address you: "Enter into my joy, for thou didst die in sorrow like me." But, how often is the end of the good man full of peace! Instead of the voice of lamentation, we hear him exclaiming, "Animated by the sweet sense of my Saviour's comforts, my heart is glad, my glory rejoices, and my flesh also shall rest in hope." He waits for me in the paradise of God, to witness his happiness, and to share in it. "My beloved speaks, and says to me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away." He doth not say, Sit ye here at the gate, while I go and rejoice yonder; but come away, for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, and sorrow and sighing have fled away for ever. O Lord Jesus, since

thy life and thy soul was filled with sorrow, my heart should be all affection, my speech all praise, and my conduct all obedience! Let my death be as thou pleasest, only let it magnify thee; and let me die in the Lord, and I shall be blessed for ever. Amen.

ADDRESS XV.

ZECHARIAH iv. 11.

“As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.”

WHAT words, Christians, can be conceived better adapted than these, to affect your hearts with what Jesus hath done for you? “Look to the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged;” not to fill you with gloom and horror, but to inflame your gratitude to your great Redeemer.

Ye were prisoners; on you corruption had fixed its chains, and on you the wrath of God rested. Imprisonment is a state of sad adversity; yet it may be endured, in a place where accommodations render it tolerable. But the place of your imprisonment was a pit, deep, dark, and loathsome, and in it there was no water to refresh, or to purify. Poor and miserable, wretched, blind, and naked, was your condition. From this pit, neither men nor angels could relieve. They stood by its brink, looking in pity on its captives; but the condition was universal; “Our help is vain.” Their compassion was like the ray that enters the dungeon of the prisoner, which shews him the nakedness of its walls, and the strength of its bars, but which lightens no chain, and inspires no hope.

“ Shall the prey be taken from the mighty ? Shall the lawful captive be delivered ? ” With the utmost anxiety these questions were put by benevolent and pitying angels. There was but one place on which hope fixed its eye, the throne of the Eternal : though in what way mercy could save without the dishonour of justice, the wisdom of angels was unable to discover. Hear, O my soul, the voice which awakened rapture in the breasts of pitying angels, and sent down hope to the scene of woe. “ The prey shall be taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive shall be delivered ; for I will contend with them that contend with thee, and I will save thy children.” A Deliverer appears, amply qualified for the arduous task. It was determined in the eternal counsels of heaven, that these prisoners should be released, and that the Messiah should die to redeem them from all iniquity. “ I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thy hand, and will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles ; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners out of prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.” In pursuance of this appointment, Jesus obeyed and died ; and in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. In the preaching of the gospel, he comes, and says to the prisoners, Go forth ; and to them that sit in darkness, Shew yourselves. Hear how he describes the manner of this deliverance, and its happy effects : “ I drew them with cords of a man, with hands of love ; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke from their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. They shall feed in their ways, and their pasture shall be in their high places. They shall not hunger or thirst, neither shall the heat nor sun smite them ; for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the streams of water shall he guide thee.”

How justly may not Jesus triumph in these wonders which he hath wrought ? Did the generous heart of

Ebedmelech triumph when he drew up Jeremiah from the frightful dungeon? Have the humane rejoiced in rescuing a sinking fellow-creature from the devouring deep? Has the patriot rejoiced in setting his captive brethren free? and may not our Redeemer, with much more reason, exult in the great things which he hath done for us? These acts of generous interposition required nothing that deserves to be compared with the sufferings and efforts of our Redeemer. "The anointed of the Lord, the breath of our nostrils, was taken in their pits, he of whom we said, Under his shadow shall we live among the heathen." He was humbled as none ever before was humbled, and bruised as none was ever bruised. On this grace of your Saviour let your hearts dwell: and in the bread now to be put into your hands, contemplate that body which was broken to procure you the bread and the water of life; and in the wine, behold the symbol of that blood of the covenant which is the price of your release, and the source of your salvation.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God." "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify thy name for evermore: for great is thy mercy toward me, and thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell." "Thou hast, in love to my soul, delivered it from the pit of corruption; thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back; the Lord was ready to save me, therefore will we sing my songs to the stringed instruments, all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord."

How blessed, O Christians, is your state! "The

Son hath made you free, and ye are free indeed." He makes you to lie down under the shadow of the tree of life ; ye draw water with joy from the wells of salvation, ye walk before God in the light of the living, and a throne eternal in the heavens is yours in promise and in hope.

Regard the blood of the covenant as precious blood. Let it have the praise of all your happiness, and the glory of all your attainments. This blood, which reached you in your low estate, shall flow for ever by the throne on which you shall reign in life, and it will be your employment through eternity, to declare the depth of guilt and misery from which it saved you.

Rejoice in this covenant. It is your covenant. Its blood is yours, to deliver you ; its promises are yours, to encourage you ; its blessings are yours, to enrich you ; its seals are yours, to assure you ; its comforts are yours, to alleviate your sorrows ; and its laws are yours, to guide you to perfection. If guilt could not sink you beneath its power, why should you imagine that affliction can ? Behold how its virtue reached David, when he went down to weep in that place of graves, where the glory of his house had been laid low : " Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure ; and this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow."

Perhaps there are some of you in a state of dark despondency, and from whom the cry is now rising to heaven, " Let thy tender mercies speedily prevent me, for I am brought very low." How sweetly doth the grace of the Redeemer assure you that relief shall come, that the Lord will help you, and that right early ! " When the poor and the needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them ; I will open rivers in dry places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys ; I will make the wilderness

a spring of water, and the dry land pools of water." The efficacy of this blood of the covenant, is felt in the lowest pit of despondence; it drops on the downcast heart, and saves the afflicted, who lie low in grief. It hath made the lamentation, "thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deeps," give place to the song, "I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made mine enemy to rejoice over me."

Take comfort from this precious blood, in the prospect of death and the grave. We shall go down to the bars of the pit, when our rest together is in the dust. But Christ was taken from prison and from judgment, to secure our deliverance in due season. Dark as this pit is, his eye beholds all that is in it; and his power shall be felt in all its depths. "What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?" Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints: and the house of silence shall resound with his praise, who blessed its repose, and hath shed through it the light of life.

Fear not that you shall be cast into the pit of hell. You must indeed flee with unwearied earnestness from the wrath to come; and never must you think that you are as far from it as is necessary, till you sit down with Christ on his throne. Yet indulge not that dread of it, which arises from a distrust of the power and grace of the Redeemer; for that mandate of heaven renders it impossible for all the powers of hell to drag you down to it, "Deliver from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom." The smoke of that pit may obscure your prospects for a season, but the Lord shall drive it away, by the spirit of his mouth, and by the brightness of his coming. Soon shall the voice from the excellent glory call you from a world of distance and darkness, imperfection and sorrow, to the scene of light, perfection, and joy, to the friend, and to the home of your

heart. "Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good word and work, to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever." Amen.

ADDRESS XVI.

ZECH. ix. 17.

"How great is his goodness!"

SUCH is the language which the contemplation of the grace of Christ at his table hath often prompted, and which we trust it is now prompting you to utter in the presence of your God. How great is the goodness that shines in his purposes! Think of the grace which was given you in Christ in the eternal counsels of heaven, and of the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Amidst all the glories of the heaven of heavens, "he rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth;" nor could angels or archangels engross the friendship of his heart, "for his delights were with the sons of men."

How great were the sacrifices which his goodness made! From riches he stooped to poverty, from happiness to the curse, from glory to shame, and from the throne to the cross. The dearest of all his enjoyments, was his Father's love; yet to the power of his anger, he yielded his soul. He gave not the armies of heaven, nor the riches of the universe, but himself, for us. How great are the gifts which his goodness bestows! Pardon to the chief of sinners, — adoption to the children of

wrath,—liberty to the captives,—wisdom to babes,—healing to wounded hearts, and holy beauties to the depraved. What are the gifts he bestows, but the liberality of goodness? What are the consolations he imparts, but the sympathy of goodness? What is the protection he affords, but the shield of goodness? What is the watchfulness which he exercises, but the care of goodness? What are the checks by which he stops us in the career of folly, but the restraints of goodness? And what is the glory he is preparing, but the crown of goodness?

How great is the extent to which his goodness spreads! It flies with the wings of the morning, to raise universal nature to life and gladness. It descends with the shadows of the evening, to hush the creation into soft repose. It proclaims salvation to the ends of the earth, and it opens heaven for men of every clime. I hear its praise in the songs of the spring, and I trust I shall soon hear it in the anthems of the blessed. If in some scenes I see a brighter blaze of goodness than in others, there is not one on earth in which I cannot trace its rays. I have seen it in the smile of infancy and the rest of age, in the contentment of the poor and the hope of the dying.

And, how great is the duration of his goodness! Our goodness is often as the morning cloud, and as the early dew; but the goodness of our Lord endureth for ever, unexhausted in its stores, and unwearied in working. This earth, which is so full of his mercy, shall pass away; time, whose rolling tide spreads its bounties from day to day, shall sink into eternity; but the Saviour's goodness shall fill a nobler sphere, with blessings suited to a state of perfection, by a stream everflowing, and ever full.

Christians, what think ye of this goodness? This was the opinion which some of the Jews once expressed with regard to him, "He is a good man." The beneficence of his life proclaimed his goodness. To man's

present happiness, his miraculous powers were devoted, and it was the grand object of all his toils and sufferings, to procure his eternal salvation. But this manner of speaking used by the Jews, seems cold, and as a eulogium on his character, it is scanty praise indeed. Thus far only will Socinians go in their ideas of him ; but how chilling is such language to the devout and affectionate heart ! How uninteresting is the object which such men contemplate at the communion table, love merely human, and a death that made no atonement ! But “ hereby perceive we the love of God toward us, in that he laid down his life for us.” No language, O Lord Jesus, can be too high for thine excellence ! I will regard thee as not only the best of men, but the best of beings, and I will honour thee as I honour the Father. It is the language of the Psalmist, which can alone express my feelings, “ How excellent is thy loving kindness, O God ! ” There are heights and depths in his love that pass knowledge ; he is the great God, and my Saviour. In eternity, in time, in the church, and in heaven, in the songs of angels, and in his people’s gratitude, in the Father’s heart, and in the Spirit’s love, he is the first and the last. Once I lived without him, but ever since I tasted that the Lord was gracious, I cannot. He shall have my supreme love, my constant and my last look, for in him I see generosity without a parallel, mercy without a limit, and grace without end.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Christians, admire his goodness. This is the exercise of heaven and of eternity. Faculties more acute than yours cannot conceive, and tongues, fired by the eloquence of heaven, cannot declare its magnitude. Superior spirits, who look on many of the objects of human admiration as you do on the wonder of children, share

in those feelings of devout astonishment with which you contemplate the grace of Jesus.

Reverence his goodness, and live under its influence. Let it be the subject of every song ; the pillar of cloud that shades you by day, and the pillar of fire that guards you by night. Let it be the meditation of solitude, and the talk of your social intercourse. The beauties of the summer appear far more charming, when viewed as spread by its hand, and its radiance brightens the gloom of winter and the darkness of midnight. Welcome affliction as the rod of goodness, and obedience as its will.

Imitate his goodness. " To do good, and to communicate, forget not. As ye have opportunity, do good to all, especially to them that are of the household of faith." Like Christ's heart, let yours be melting ; and like his hands, let yours be open. Be liberal and steady in your support of the institutions of piety and charity, and let no cavil or pretext of their enemies, induce you to diminish or withdraw your aid. Let this striking character of our Lord accompany you wherever you go, " He went about doing good." With this object in view, selfishness will not prevail, nor will beneficence become weary.

Lament the general disregard of his goodness. " O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ! " Let the idea of the unworthy returns which are made by so many to a Benefactor in heaven, suppress the murmurs which are ready to burst from your hearts at the ingratitude of those whom you have obliged. Your gratitude may make the unthankful to blush ; your fervour may make the careless to burn. The melody of praise heard from the dwelling of humble poverty, may make the luxurious and the wealthy ashamed of that discontent, which frets and curses in the bosom of abundance. Rejoice in the hope that men shall yet utter abundantly the memory of his great goodness, and sing of his righteousness.

Beware of abusing his goodness. The talents with

which he hath entrusted you, he will soon require ; and no indulgence can you expect from him, if you have hid them in the earth, or squandered them in folly. Happy will it be for those who shall be found good and faithful servants ; in them his bounty is honoured, and they shall be its objects for ever.

Rejoice in the hope of the Psalmist, " Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." Mine enemies may imprecate reproach and shame to follow me, but the curse causeless shall not come. My fears may suggest to me that my poverty may come as one that travaileth, and my want as an armed man ; but for more pleasing expectations, I have every security which the love and the promise, the death and the life, of Christ can give me. " I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Listen not for one moment to the dark forebodings of terror and despair, but give all diligence to attain the full assurance of hope to the end. Think what Jesus is now preparing for you ; a place in heaven, and a safe conveyance to it. When faith looks at this object, the tears of sorrow cease to drop, and the slackening pace is quickened. The Lord shall give that which is good for your present support, and for your future felicity. You may receive what nature will deem evil things in this world, but hereafter your joy shall be unmixed and full.

Soon " shall you come and sing in the heights of Zion, and flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil, and for the young of the flock, and of the herd ; and your soul shall be as a watered garden, and ye shall not sorrow any more at all." " O how great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee," and which shall gild every throne with splendour, and fill every heart with pleasures evermore !

" Now may the good Lord pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fa-

thers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary." "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." Amen.

ADDRESS XVII.

ZECH. ix. 17.

"How great is his beauty!"

SUCH is the language of all who have seen Jesus. How great is the beauty of his divine excellencies! Their lustre is too bright even for the cherubims to behold with open face. "He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Holiness underived, and mercy inexhaustible; almighty power and infinite wisdom, are his. While the Jews saw in him only the carpenter's son, while many discern in him merely a man eminent for wisdom and goodness, we behold in him the form of God, the fulness of the Godhead, and "the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Honour and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

Behold him as the Son of man, and, in this view, "how great is his beauty!" How sweet was the mildness of his patience! How lovely the fervour of his charity! Devotion, in its sublimest aspirations, marked his walk with God; and the kindest sympathies of friendship and compassion, his intercourse with men. How delightful was the benignity which smiled on his infant countenance! How captivating the demeanour, which made him, in opening youth, increase in favour with men! "How beautiful on the moun-

tains were the feet of him that preached good tidings !” and in the fields and villages, the hands of him who ministered to the happiness of the wretched, and at whose touch disease fled away ! Ere his course was finished, “ his visage was indeed marred more than any man’s, and his form than the sons of men,” but it was labour and anguish that wasted it. Watching and toil effaced the bloom of his countenance, and the lustre of his eye was dimmed by the tears of sorrow. How great is his beauty, in his dyed garments in the garden ! There is no voice which has such power to melt the heart, as that of our Saviour’s lamentations ; and no spirit was ever so mild and indulgent as that which thus apologised for the companions who slept during his agony, “ The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak ?” How affecting is the appearance of the Saviour in the whole scene of suffering ! The idea of his love spreads a glory over the crown of thorns, and renders the face which he hid not from shame and spitting, more interesting to the heart than that of an angel. How lovely is the face of a dying saint, when we see on it the serenity of patience, the animation of hope, and the kind affection that says, “ I could not part with you, but to go to my Saviour !” but behold, on the cross of Christ every grace hath its perfect work, and shines with unrivalled glory. How beautiful is his countenance, when covered with the paleness of death ! Never did death come to any in a form so hideous as he did to Christ, and never did he assume a form so pleasing as when the Saviour had vanquished him. “ O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?” The pious now feel friendship’s grasp in thy cold hand, and the destruction of sin and sorrow in thy last stroke.

How great is the Saviour’s beauty now ! Hear how the apostle John describes it : “ I saw in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. His head and

his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were as a flame of fire. And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth went a two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the sun when he shineth in his strength." The splendour was too dazzling for mortal eyes. At the sight of it, the disciple that once leaned on his bosom, "fell at his feet as dead." Jesus wears this garment and this girdle, because for you he was stript naked and bound with cords. His feet are like fine brass, because for you they were brought to the dust of death. And his countenance is like the sun shining in its strength, because for you it was changed by sorrow and death.

Now, Christians, what influence have these representations of the Saviour on your minds! "One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root from a dry ground, he hath no form, nor comeliness; when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Such was the estimate formed of him by the Jews, under the influence of ignorance and prejudice. But is it your opinion of him? No; "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee for ever." "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely." Admire his beauty more and more. Here your praise cannot be too glowing, nor

your wonder equal to the excellence of its object. In that world where he is seen face to face, not an eye wanders from him ; nor is there a heart there but feels as the Psalmist did when the Spirit of Glory rested on him, “ Whom have I in heaven but thee ? ”

“ O love the Lord, all ye his saints.” The perfection of beauty demands your whole heart. He claims your love from the excellencies of his character, as well as from his gifts ; and in his view, that is the purest and the noblest affection, which loves him for himself. It is impossible that creatures can love him to the degree that his excellencies deserve. There is one only whose complacency in him is equal to his worth, I mean the Being whose eternal delight he was. “ Behold mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth.”

Let the Saviour’s beauty turn away your eyes from the ensnaring attractions of the world, and keep you from doating on its vain show. Let moral beauty be ever that which excites your delight and your praise ; the integrity, which no prospect of gain can corrupt ; the kindness, which no ingratitude can chill ; the humility, which no elevation can destroy ; the purity which, in a dissolute age, keeps itself untainted ; and the contentment, which submits cheerfully to every hardship.

Let this beauty reconcile you to the perishing nature of all earthly attractions. “ When with rebukes thou correctest man for iniquity, thou wastest his beauty like a moth.” Let this flower perish, the Rose of Sharon never fades. With what regret would we behold the desolations of the declining year, the withering leaves dropping from the trees, the tempest scowling over the hills, and the feeble influence of the winter’s sun, if we had no hope of the spring ; but we know that the God of nature shall make all things new, and the God of grace will beautify the meek with salvation.

Rejoice that the Saviour will beautify you. He will free you from all the remains of sin, and adorn you with all the beauties of holiness. “ Though ye have lien

among the pots, ye shall appear as doves, whose wings are covered with silver, and their feathers with yellow gold." He will brighten the pallid face of sorrow, and "he will give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness." It is the purpose of his Father's heart to conform you to the image of his Son ; and in the accomplishment of it, his glory will shine in your rising excellence. He will be admired, not only in himself, but in that resemblance to him, which shall be apparent in all that believe.

Your beauty shall consume in the grave from your dwelling ; but the body which corruption hath disfigured and worms consumed, he will restore and fashion like not merely what his body was on earth, but to his glorious body. Such is the beauty with which he will deck you, that this is the language in which he will address you, "Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot on thee." And to this you will answer, "In thy beauty we shine, in thy grace we stand, and in thy joy we rejoice." "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing." Thus arrayed, thus shining like the Saviour, with no sorrow around you to embitter your happiness, and no dread of its diminution or change, you will say with Peter on the mount, "Lord, it is good for us to be here," for we are with thee. "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

ADDRESS XVIII.

MATTHEW xiv. 27.

“ Be of good cheer ; it is I, be not afraid.”

THESE were the words of Jesus to his disciples on a memorable occasion. The tempest was raging, the ship was in the midst of the sea tossed with waves, the night was dark ; a figure appears walking on the waters, and superstition combines its terrors with those of nature to overwhelm the mind. Jesus straightway addressed them in a manner which suppressed their fears, and revived their courage. Such is the language in which he now speaks to you.

To you, who are confounded at the brightness of his glory, he saith, It is I, the faithful friend, the Guardian of the helpless. The compassion of my heart I have carried to the throne ; and my reign is the rule of grace and love.

To you, whom guilt is depressing, he saith, It is I ; I am come from my throne to shew you what I bore for you on the cross, and to sprinkle you with my blood, that you may be whiter than the snow. The timid penitent I glory to acknowledge, and none of his tears shall fall in vain : “ To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.”

To you who are dismayed at the thought of the presence of spiritual intelligences around you, he says, It is I ; I to whose controul they are all subjected, and at whose command they advance or retire. With me by your side, you may exclaim, “ I am persuaded that no angels, principalities, nor powers, shall be able to sepa-

rate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus my Lord."

To you who are lamenting thus, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts ; all thy waves and billows pass over me," he saith, It is I. "O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempests, and not comforted ; behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." The Father of mercies rides in the whirlwind, and the God of peace sits on the floods.

To you who are bewailing the loss of pious friends, with whom you used to sit at the communion table, whose hearts used to burn, and whose tears often fell with yours, Jesus says, It is I. "I will not leave you comfortless, I am come unto you." In my presence you shall enjoy the purest delights of friendship. Prepare your hearts for the voice, the light, and the blessings of my love.

Sublime is the description which the Psalmist gives of the voice of the Lord ; but how different is the voice with which he says to the soul, "I am thy salvation." The voice of his thunder breaks the cedar—shakes the mountains—divides the flames of fire—discovers the forests, and lays waste the scene of beauty ; but the voice of his love binds up the bruised reed, composes the agitated soul, causes the smoking flax to shine, brings forth the obscurest grace to view, and makes the desert to rejoice and to blossom as the rose.

"I will hear what God the Lord will speak." O that he may say to my soul, "Fear not, for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." But what are the motives which influence you to make this request ? Is it the selfishness which looks only to your own comfort, or is it that the compassion and grace of God may be glorified in raising you from doubts and fears, to the full assurance of faith ? Is it that you may serve him

with more alacrity, and rejoice in him more abundantly than before? Is it that you may be able to comfort others with the same comforts wherewith you are comforted of God? Then to you God now saith, "I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"SAY ye to the righteous, it shall be well with him." "Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you."

But I hear the voice of sorrow complaining thus, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour." "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." But how soft and sweet is the Saviour's answer: "I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice." In the darkest hour, hope in his word. Amidst the storms and tempests of sorrow, believe his love. "Although thou sayest thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him, therefore trust thou in him." Yes, I will, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "We had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God that raiseth the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

Hath the Redeemer made himself known to you as your friend? Cultivate fellowship with him, and be zealous for his honour. If ye keep his commandments, ye shall abide in his love.

Hath he been your refuge and your strength, a present help in trouble? You may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do

unto me." This cross may be too heavy for nature, but it cannot be too heavy for nature supported by the Omnipotent. This service may be arduous, but it is not too difficult for him who is strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. This sea is rough, but the Lord rules the raging of the ocean, and I am safe under his care, whom winds and waves obey.

Let the generous and seasonable interpositions of Jesus in your behalf, strengthen your affection to him. His presence is a defence in every danger, the charm of every scene of happiness, and an answer to every fear. Lord, thou deservest my whole heart, and whatever else I love, I will love it for thy sake, and I will love it in thee.

It is incumbent on you, Christians, to defend, by the innocence and cheerfulness of your lives, the reality, the sweetness, and the virtuous influence of experimental religion. You have to defend it against the presumptuous dreamer, the cold speculator, and the worldling, who minds only the things of the flesh. They will scoff at the boasts of enthusiasm; but in their hearts they will do justice to that meekness and gravity with which the modest, the prudent, and the steadfast believer, "gives a reason of the hope that is in him."

Provoke not the Saviour to depart from you. Would you put yourself in the condition of the traveller, round whom the light dies away, and who must pursue his journey in solitude, terror, and darkness?

The Redeemer hath spoken to you; and what hath been your language to him? "O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord." Your hearts impel you to add, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." "All people will walk every one in the name of his God; but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God, for ever and ever." Through honour and dishonour, through good and through bad report, through ease and difficulty, in solitude and in the crowd, in life and in death, I will cleave to thee.

I will go in the strength of the Lord God. I will go on my way rejoicing. These are pious and noble resolutions, and the Saviour hath heard them, and they are recorded on high. But they must not only be made, but kept; and the more excellent they are, the more base it is to be unfaithful to them. May that God, whose kindness has suggested them, and at whose feet we now place them, confirm us in every holy purpose, in every religious principle, and in every Christian duty! Amen.

ADDRESS XIX.

MATTHEW xxii. 11—13.

“And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

CHRISTIANS, we often address you at the table of our Master in the language of consolation; but this parable calls on us to mingle the voice of alarm with it, and to warn the presumptuous hypocrite of the fearfulness which shall surprise him.

The King came in to see the guests. He marks not merely the gravity of their outward appearance, but the most secret workings of the heart. There is not a table that is filled at which the guests are unnoticed; but such is his mercy, that his presence is oftener felt in the

blessings of his love, than in the impressions and the upbraidings of his anger. "Thou, God, seest me."

He saw there one not having on the wedding-garment. This expression does not intimate that the appearance of a hypocrite at the communion table is a rare occurrence ; but that, however few may be their number, and by whatever crowds of the pious they may be surrounded, the God of Zion will "find them out." Let not the hypocrite congratulate himself on the dexterity with which he personates the character of a genuine disciple, and that no human eye regards him with suspicion, for the Son of God is here, whose eyes are like a flame of fire ; and to them all hearts are naked and open.

How mild, at first view, seems the expostulation of the King ! Yet in it there is a majesty and a force which overwhelms the soul of the sinner. "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment ?" How camest thou to the commemoration of my Son's death, without a pious regard to a suffering Redeemer ; and to the feast of love, without the charity which is the end of the commandment ? Didst thou come to insult the entertainment, and the entertainer ? Didst thou imagine that my eye would be unable to detect thee ? Didst thou prefer thy own raiment to mine, as better than any with which I could furnish thee ? Didst thou imagine, that because neither the guests nor the servants resisted thy intrusion, that there was nothing to dread from me ? Didst thou come to this feast, that by the mask of a religious profession thou mightest more securely carry on thy course of knavery and oppression, and hush the censure which hath assailed thy character ?

O my God, these are dreadful challenges indeed, but I trust they do not apply to me. I have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, "who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ;" and in this character I have received him, and his Spirit I wish to cherish. But the convicted hypocrite can make no such

appeal,—he is speechless. He cannot say that he was never told that a wedding-garment was necessary, for this was repeated to him at every sacramental solemnity. He cannot urge that one was never offered to him. “Hearken to me, ye that are stout-hearted, and far from righteousness; behold I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off, and my salvation, it shall not tarry.” “O Jerusalem, wilt thou be made clean; when shall it once be?” What can be more ample, or more urgent, than these calls of mercy? It is not the speechlessness of one who hath somewhat to urge, but is silent because he knows that his pleadings would be vain. It is the silence, not merely of nature overawed by majesty, but of conscious guilt, and of utter despair. It is the silence of one that feels himself stripped of every plea and of every hope. Ye saints of God, into your mouth Jesus hath put the new song; and he hath taught you to order your cause before him, and to fill your mouths with arguments.

How solemn is the sentence of the convicted hypocrite! and how speedy is its execution! He cannot make a single effort, either to resist, or to retard, the execution of his sentence. So firm is the grasp which these servants will take of him, that no struggle can relieve him from it; and so great is the force with which they shall cast him forth, that he must fall down into the lowest hell. What a dreadful fall, from the society of the pious to the midst of the damned; and from the scene of gladness to the horrors of endless despair! God calls out of darkness into marvellous light; but from this outer darkness he will raise none. He looses the bands of the wretched, and sets the prisoners free; but these cords he will never break asunder. He wipes the tear from the eye of sorrow; but to this weeping he will put no end.

Is there at the communion table a single individual, whose conscience is now accusing him of unpardoned guilt, and of a willing subjection to the thralldom of

corruption? Let him listen to the thunder as it roars from Sinai, and magnify the patience of that God who hath not yet put this sentence in execution against him. Let him accept of the salvation which is offered him, and submit to the righteousness of God, that the King may behold in him a trophy of his grace, and may receive the homage of the heart where Satan thought he would be dishonoured by the traitor's kiss, and by the traitor's praise.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

How delightful is the language in which the character and the happiness of genuine saints are described! We feel that it is peculiarly so, when we contrast it with the awful representations of this parable. "The king's daughter is all glorious within, and her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle-work; the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the king's palace."

Bless his name for that distinguishing grace, which hath been shewn so abundantly to you. The presence of God is not the object of your fear, but of your desire. Instead of issuing this mandate to the angels, he will send them forth to take you by the hand, and to lead you to the regions of light and gladness, "where your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw its shining; where the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and the days of your mourning shall be ended." There no suspicion, and no dread of this question, shall ever enter into your minds, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on the wedding-garment?" Instead of the voice of sorrow, the shout shall be heard, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come,

and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." Blessed are they which are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb. When you think on the horrors of that doom from which God hath saved you, and on the blessed hope to which you are raised, you will not deem any gratitude to him too ardent, or any obedience too ample.

The King hath found you possessing the wedding-garment; but his eye hath beheld much imperfection in your graces, and many corrupt principles in your hearts; and when he calls on you to answer for these, you are silent, for you feel you are very far from being so holy as you ought to be. You say with Job, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer? I will lay my hand on my mouth, and I will put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope." "But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." He will intercede for those, who, in the modesty and humiliation of true repentance, are ashamed to plead for themselves.

Let this parable teach you to beware of judging one another; for it is the province of the King to detect the hypocrite. It is not our duty, at the communion table, to call up to remembrance the faults of our brethren, but our own. In the procedure of the Almighty, mercy rejoiceth against judgment; and let this characterize, more than it hath ever yet done, our sentiments and conduct.

The lamentations which are made over the little care which is exercised to maintain the purity of church communion, do not always flow from zeal for the Lord. Too often they are the effusions of party-spirit, or of a proud and censorious heart. "Why dost thou judge thy brother, or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." A man may go to the communion table with the faith

which can remove mountains ; with an intelligence to which mysteries are open ; with a zeal which courts death for the sake of the gospel ; and with a hermit's abstraction from the cares and the pleasures of the world ; yet if he hath not charity, he is nothing.

I exhort parents, when they point out to their children the duty of shewing forth the Lord's death, to teach them the necessity of their obtaining the righteousness and the Spirit of Christ ; and to urge their acceptance of these as offered to them in the gospel. Then will they follow you to the Lord's table, to honour your common Friend and Saviour ; and when the King comes in to see the guests, he will rejoice in that union by which nature and grace have conjoined your hearts, and will make you doubly happy, happy in your own privileges, and happy in the felicity of each other. " O continue thy loving-kindness with them that know thee, and thy righteousness with the upright in heart."

ADDRESS XX.

MATTHEW xxvii. 37.

" This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

It has been common with men in all ages, to form inscriptions on palaces and public buildings, on monumental pillars and tomb-stones. These inscriptions are intended to commemorate the exploits of the brave, the magnificence of the opulent, the researches of the learned, or the virtues of the good. They are read with eagerness by the men of that generation in which they are written ; and, in after ages, when they are in a great

measure defaced by the hand of time, curiosity labours to decipher them, and glories in its success, if it is able, after many efforts, to accomplish it. Thus men act, and thus they feel, though the person to whom these inscriptions refer, stood in no relation to them; and though the events to which they allude, yield to them no advantage. And shall the inscription on our Lord's cross be overlooked or forgotten; an inscription which exhibits to us, in so lively and affecting a manner, man's only Saviour and eternal King? The zeal which the curious shew to find out the meaning of ancient inscriptions,—the eagerness with which all run to read the epitaph which commemorates departed genius or worth,—and the vast sums which superstition in its folly has expended in collecting and decorating the fancied relics of the cross,—will condemn those who see nothing in the title placed above the head of a suffering Redeemer, that deserves their study, or that ministers to their improvement. Whatever might be Pilate's design in placing this inscription on the cross, Providence intended to promote it by many important purposes.

By this inscription, the attention of the vast multitude of strangers who were then present in Jerusalem, from all quarters of the civilized world, was strongly called to the pretensions and to the character of our Lord. John tells us that it was read by many of the Jews. A title so extraordinary, and which struck so powerful a chord of feeling in the heart of a Jew, must have excited a general curiosity, and led to the most useful inquiries into our Lord's history. The information which they obtained, rivetted on their minds by the prodigies at his death, they would carry with them to the lands where they abode; and it would thus contribute to prepare the world for the triumphant progress of the apostles, when they came preaching Christ crucified. There are probably many in heaven, who, while they adore their Lord on the throne, rejoice that ever they saw him on the cross, and say, “It was there, _O

King, that my heart first felt thy power ; and it was there I first saw that name Jesus, which I will bless for ever and ever."

This inscription was written in Greek, in Latin, and in Hebrew, to shew that every language under heaven will exhibit the glory of Christ's kingdom, and the power of his grace. Though the words of eternal life were long confined to the classical languages of antiquity, yet in modern times many nations can now read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Piety is now employing its stores, and learning its skill and its efforts, in making known, by translations of the Scriptures, God's way upon the earth, and his saving health among the nations. The translations which have been already made, will remain as trophies of the religion and the munificence of British Christians, when the trophies of war have passed away. Who can think on the patience and labour that are necessary to acquire the uncouth and barbarous languages of savage tribes, the privations which must be endured, and the dangers which must be braved in imparting to them the knowledge of salvation, without feeling that the exertions of these pioneers of the gospel cannot be too highly appreciated !

This inscription intimated the gracious designs of heaven to the Jews. Though the gospel dispensation was chiefly intended for the Gentiles, there is hope in its end for the Jews. Jesus will shew himself their King. He will not, indeed, appear as the temporal prince whom they have so long and so fondly expected ; nor shall his victories be marked by the carnage and the devastation of their oppressors. He shall reign in their hearts, and conquer their unbelief, carnality, and bigotry. He shall save them from enemies more cruel than any of the tyrants who have afflicted them ; rule them with a sceptre more gracious than that of the monarchs whose names they so fondly cherish ; and bestow on them an inheritance more glorious than they ever possessed in Palestine, and blessings more valuable than any that

ever descended on the mountains of Zion. The children of Israel, and the children of Judah, shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness. What a blessed change will this be, when He who is now the object of contempt and of enmity to the Jews, and at whose head they direct their blasphemies, shall see them bowing at his feet, glorying in his cross, and shouting Hosannahs!

This inscription was fixed on our Lord's cross, to shew, that his kingdom is not a worldly one, that it has not for its ensigns the glittering baubles of earthly magnificence, and that it has not for its rewards the vain distinctions of earthly splendour. Thus we are taught, that through manifold tribulations the disciples of Jesus shall enter into the kingdom, and that patience and charity are their glory and their crown.

To the carnal mind these are hard sayings, but in your eyes are they reasonable and just? We must endure affliction, and conquer in death ere we can reign in bliss. It is not from the couch of indolence that men rise to everlasting rest. It is by our struggles with temptation and sorrow that our fidelity to our Master is tried, and that we are prepared for entering into his joy.

This inscription was fixed above our Lord's head, to shew that his power was from on high, that the stone which the builders rejected was to become the head of the corner, that he was to have a name given him superior to every name, and that he who comes from above is above all.

This inscription Pilate would not alter at the solicitations of the Jews. And what though the kings and rulers of the earth may say of Messiah the Prince, Let us break his bands asunder, and let us blot out his name from under heaven; He that sits on high shall hold them in derision; and this is his reply to the vain scoffs and threats of insolent impiety, "yet have I set my King on my holy hill of Zion."

It is an interesting circumstance, that the name Jesus, a Saviour, was conjoined by Pilate, in this inscription, with that of King. He is indeed a Prince and a Saviour; and delightful is the union of power and grace in his character. His throne is a throne of grace, and his sceptre is a protecting sceptre. All the prerogatives of royalty, and all the spirit and deeds of a Saviour, are his. There have been kings whose empires, from the tyranny of their ruler, resembled a vast prison. Their parents shuddered to see their children rise to manhood, as marking them out for the destroyer; and beheld their fields flourish with a sigh, because they blossomed only for the spoiler. But the rule of Jesus is like a morning without clouds, and like tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. To work salvation, is the employment of his sceptre. The songs of salvation are his regal anthem; and the blessings of salvation are the gifts of his throne. "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, and he will save us."

Christians, have you taken Jesus for your King? Doth his excellence engross the affections, and doth his law controul the passions of your hearts? Are your opinions regulated by the word of Christ, and not by the speculations of men, however ingenious, or the commandments of men, however venerable? Is your conduct regulated by his statutes, and not by the maxims and customs of the world? Is this the request of your hearts, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Is this your language, "I will extol thee, my God, O King; I will bless thy name for ever and ever?" Jesus is King of the Jews. Are you Israelites indeed? "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circumcision is that which is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." Can you apply this description to yourselves? What do you know

of the movements of the pious affections, and of that struggle with the corruptions of the heart which death only shall terminate? Have you crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts? Regardless of the ridicule which may attach to you as precise and austere, as affecting superior sanctity, and shewing more of the spirit of the Pharisee than that of the liberal-minded Christian, have you attached yourselves to the people that dwell alone, and do you refuse to follow the multitude in their follies? Is the reproach of Christ more pleasant to you than the flattering titles of the world, and, in your esteem, greater riches than all its treasures?—"He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him." The King is approaching to see the guests. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of Glory may come in."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"When the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." "They have seen thy goings, the steps of majesty of my God and my King, in the sanctuary." To you he hath spoken peace; and he hath blessed you by his smile. "Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him, let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." Lift up your eyes to heaven, and behold the name which he wears there. He hath a name written on his vesture, and on his thigh, "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Hear how his royalty is proclaimed, not by one contemptuous individual, but by adoring millions. "And I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Nay, hearest thou not

that voice which came again and again from the excellent glory, "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever?" "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Christians, have you no anthems to sing in honour of your King? "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." My heart indites a good matter concerning my Lord; and had I the harp and the ardour of an angel, this commandment would I glory to obey, "Sing praises to our King, sing praises."

Let your lives be a practical testimony to the royalty of Christ. This is the language which he now addresses to you:—"My son, forget not my law, but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days, long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee. Bind them about thy neck, write them on the tables of thy heart." These are the badges of honour worn by Christ's subjects; these are the collars, and the stars, the chains, and the garters, which distinguish the excellent of the earth. How affectionate is the style of this injunction, "my son!" Other kings have called themselves the fathers of their people, but how seldom have they deserved the title! but Jesus is the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. And when love thus mingles with authority, can you disobey?

Approve yourselves, then, the obedient subjects of your Lord. "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey." Who is the man that you consider as the best subject of an earthly king? Is it the man whose zeal is confined to the loyalty of his toasts, and to the bitterness of his invectives against his prince's enemies? Is it not the man who faithfully obeys the laws of the nation, and exerts himself to the utmost of his power to promote its peace, order, and prosperity? The worst enemies of religion, are those who, amid loud professions of zeal for its doctrines and its or

dinances, trample on its precepts of sobriety, and justice, and truth. They make infidels represent Christianity as a religion which renders men hypocrites in the church, and knaves in society ; while all who believe it, know that it sanctifies the heart for God, and leads the steps in the paths of righteousness.

This inscription on the cross, calls on you to be zealous for the extension of our Lord's kingdom. " Thy kingdom come," is the prayer which he hath put into your mouths. It is not for the spread of a rule which carries terror, rapine, and degradation with it, that you pray ; but for the diffusion of a power which ennobles the character, meliorates the condition, and brightens the prospects of man. Who would have thought, that zeal in such a cause would have been reviled by any who professed themselves friendly to the improvement of their species ?

Remember, Christians, that on your cross there is an inscription placed by the hand of your Lord himself : " A companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ." Your enemies may ascribe your misfortunes to causes neither honourable to your prudence, nor your integrity, nor your diligence ; but your righteousness shall be brought to the light, and your eyes shall see God's salvation. If we suffer in the spirit, and according to the will of Christ, we shall also reign with him.

At the communion table, place the crown of your salvation on the head of Jesus. What an interesting sight is this to the happy spirits in heaven, when the blessings of those that were ready to perish, the praises of the grateful, and the acclamations of the glowing heart, encircle the head of Jesus ! Go forth, doth the Eternal say, " O ye daughters of Zion, and behold your King with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart."

Pray for the approach of the period " when the Sa-

viour shall lift up his ensign on the mountains, and call the Jewish tribes, so long "a nation scattered and peeled," to rest and glory, and write upon them his new name. Then shall they tread the way to Zion, triumphing in Messiah's excellencies, rejoicing in the preciousness of his blood, and in the grace of his throne, and calling to their Gentile brethren, "O magnify the Lord with us, and let us exalt his name together."

In the society of his enemies, be faithful to your King, and give place to them by subjection, not even for a moment. Seasonable reproof, from a mouth opened with judgment, and a testimony to truth and virtue, from a tongue on which is the law of kindness, will put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and may gain them to the wisdom of the just.

Let the afflictions of life be viewed as displays of the sovereignty of Jesus; and however much they may thwart your views and your wishes, "Not my will, but thine be done," is the language that becomes you. By the murmurs of impatience, you rebel against Him, and by fretfulness of heart in trouble, you vex his Holy Spirit. In your conflict with the king of terrors, hold fast your faith in the Prince of Life; and commit your bodies to the grave, in the hope that here Jesus shall make known his power, his fidelity, and his love. Soon shall earth, and seas, and winds, give up their dead in obedience to Him; and "then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Sion, and before his ancients gloriously."

ADDRESS XXI.

MATTHEW XXVII. 1.

“And behold the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.”

THE rending of this vail was one of the many memorable circumstances which attended the crucifixion of our Lord. From its extent and thickness, from the shortness of the time which had elapsed since its suspension, and from the manner in which it was protected from the weather and from violence, the rending of it thus instantaneous and total, could only have been effected by the power of God. Most important are the truths which this event exhibited.

By the rending of this vail, Providence intimated that the ceremonial dispensation was abolished. With vigilant care was the most holy place kept sacred from all intrusion. Into it none were permitted to enter except the High Priest, and he only once in the year. Now it is thrown open to public view, and in a short time after this the abomination of desolation stood in the midst of it; around the mercy-seat, the blood of the slain flowed, and with their ashes its ruins were mingled. “Behold, Christians, the goodness and the severity of God; on them which fell severity, but towards you goodness.” “He hath given you a nail in his holy place;” and his promise to the Christian church is, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” This holy temple its enemies shall never destroy, this Jerusalem they shall never lay on heaps, and this mount Sion they shall never plough like a field.

In the rending of this vail, we behold a token of the union of Jews and Gentiles in one church. The ob-

stacles to this union were removed by the death of Christ. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to the dogs," were the words of our Lord to the Syrophenician woman, speaking according to the spirit and views of the Jews, for the trial of her faith. But is this the way in which he speaks to you? No. "Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved." Boast not, O ye Jews, as if to us there was no sacrifice for sin; Christ is the propitiation for sins, and not for yours only, but for the sins of the whole world. Boast not as if we had no mercy-seat to come to, for we are invited to approach a throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in the time of need. Boast not as if we had no interest in the ark of the covenant; for God has promised, and how amply is he fulfilling it—"I will call them my people which were not my people, and her beloved which was not beloved." The Gentiles, who inherited lies and vanity, are now possessors of the sure mercies of David. Boast not as if we were strangers to the cloud of glory; for the white cloud fills our temples, and our enraptured hearts exclaim, "God is here!" I present to you, Christians, the affecting recollections mentioned by the Apostle Paul, and review them with humility, gratitude, and joy. "Wherefore, remember that ye, being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, that at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were afar off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace, and that he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace

to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh ; for through Him we both have an access by one Spirit unto the Father."

The rending of this vail was an emblem of the heavenly sanctuary being now laid open to us. It is now made manifest by our Lord's appearing, who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. Now the mists are scattered which rested on the verdant hills of the better country, its paradise, its temple, and its river of life ; and they are exhibited to our view, to give vigour to our hope, fervour to our gratitude, and animation to our pursuit of things above. Cherubims and a flaming sword guarded the way to the earthly paradise, and the vail of the temple had a similar use under the old dispensation, with regard to the symbols of the divine presence ; but there is nought to prevent our approach to heaven, or to debar us from entering into the holiest of all. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

Now, Christians, doth not this rent vail teach you to contemplate the death of Christ with a broken heart ? Shall your hearts be stone, when the Saviour's body and heart are broken ? The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, the torn heart he will heal, and the wounded spirit he will bind up. Now let your cry be, "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens and come down, and make the mountains to flow away at thy presence !" Scatter every thing that separates betwixt thee and my soul. Shine forth, O thou that dwellest between the cherubims, before angels, devils, and men ; before angels, that they may rejoice at it ; devils, that they may trem-

ble ; and men, that they may glorify our Father who is in heaven. Stir up thy strength, O God ; come and save us.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” Bless God that you live under the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ. Think with pity on the Jews. “ Even to this day the vail is upon their hearts ; nevertheless when they shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away.” O what a triumph will it be to the cross, when its inveterate enemies shall fall before it, and when that which is now to them a stumbling-block, shall be their chief joy, and their only hope ! That generous Saviour, who wept over their fatal blindness, will assuredly rejoice when they shall remember and turn to the Lord, and when the loud and bitter cry, “ Away with him, away with him,” shall be succeeded by the claim, “ My Lord and my God !”

Rejoice, Christians, in the merciful designs of heaven, with regard to the Gentile nations. “ He will destroy the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.” The light of salvation shall visit the dark places of the earth ; the devices of superstition to keep the human mind in subjection to its fooleries, shall be exposed to the contempt of all ; the smoke of the pit shall be driven away from around them, and “ the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” “ They shall fear the name of the Lord from the west.” The regions of liberty and science shall wait for his law. They shall hail his glory from the rising of the sun ; and the mosques of the false pro-

phet, and the temples of the heathen, shall be cleansed for his altars and his spiritual worship.

Let your hope enter within the vail, in the full and delightful anticipation of your speedy admission. And is this the only grace which should enter it? No. Let love enter within the vail, and say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee!" let faith enter within it, and say, "I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." Let patience enter, and behold the good resting from their sorrows: let gratitude enter, and take up its song and its harp: let humility enter, and see how all its honours are devoted to Jesus: and let charity enter, and mark how, amidst all the varieties in character, origin, and glory among its inhabitants, there is but one heart. Let desire enter, and say, O when shall I come and appear before God! and let joy enter, and taste of its rivers of pleasure. Soon shall the period arrive of your actual admission. The Forerunner has entered for you; and as you would wish that your entrance should not be with fear and trembling, with doubt and hesitation, "give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, and then there shall be administered to you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of your Lord and Saviour." There you shall find a temple without a vail, a church without spot, day without night, worship without a pause, youth without decay, happiness without measure, and glory without end. Manifest a respect, high, constant, and universal, to the commandments of God. "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city."

ADDRESS XXII.

LUKE ii. 7.

“And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapt him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

IN contemplating a magnificent edifice, in the strength and ornament of which art hath displayed its powers, we feel a peculiar pleasure in the survey, if we can look back to the period when we saw its foundations laid. In beholding the river issuing with full flood into the ocean, we contrast with wonder its majestic current, with the feeble spring in which it originates. But what is that astonishment and delight, compared to the feelings with which we look at Him in the manger at Bethlehem, whose fame is filling the world, and whose religion is blessing the nations ! History describes the spot where men of renown drew their first breath. Glowing ambition hangs over the place where the conqueror rose. Literature consecrates the hamlet where genius first saw the light, and whose surrounding scenery first called forth the sketches of its pencil, or the melodies of its lyre. And can religion look to Bethlehem with indifference ? or gratitude withdraw her gaze from the spot, where the Son of man first came to seek and to save the lost ?

Behold, Christians, in this scene, the exact accomplishment of ancient prophecy ; which, like the star, guides our steps to the place where the infant Saviour is lying. “Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he arise unto me, who shall rule my people Israel ; whose goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting.”

In contemplating this scene, let us mark with wonder, that wisdom and power of the Highest, which united divinity with human nature. How astonishing is the thought, that the babe who lies in that manger, is one with Him whose throne is fixed in heaven; that this weeping infant is one with Him, whose voice is the thunder, and whose arm is omnipotence; that He whom his mother is wrapping in swaddling clothes, is one with Him who is clothed with light; and that this child, whose dormant powers shall open through a long series of culture, is one with Him whose understanding is infinite! "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."

Providence strengthened Mary for those offices of care and love to her new born child, which she had no female friend to perform. How affectingly does the Saviour allude to this! "Thou art he that took me out of the womb. Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb. Thou art my God from my mother's belly." In the unwearied efforts of maternal tenderness for his comfort, he felt his Father's kindness. How delightful to Mary were such ministrations, to one in whom she saw not only a son, but a Saviour! The mother's bosom is the infant's home, and its sweetest music is a mother's voice.

Let your minds fix on the humiliating circumstances which marked the birth of our Lord. No heavenly messengers are dispatched to prepare a palace and a bed of state for his reception. So selfish and cruel were the occupiers of the inn, that not one of them would resign his place to Mary, though she was now in a situation that required every kind and delicate attention. She retires to the stable, and there gives birth to Him who came in the name of the Lord to save us. That babe is sinless. It is the Holy One of God; yet in this state of destitution he appears on earth, as an affecting token of the indignities and sufferings which awaited him hereafter.

Sorrow came to Bethlehem, and marked him for her child ; and poverty foreboded, that he whom the world's scowl had driven to the manger, would not have where to lay his head.

Christians, ye are now commemorating his departure in sorrow. Behold the humiliation of his entrance into the world, and mark how, from the first to the last of his life on earth, he humbled himself for you. Trace this affecting truth in the tears of Bethlehem, and in the sorrows of Calvary.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ When he bringeth his first-begotten into the world, he saith, Let all the angels of God worship him.” And shall not your hearts now do him homage ? If, amidst all the indignities of Calvary, ye triumph in the glories of his cross, shall not you, amid all the humiliations of Bethlehem, exult in Him, who, though he was of the seed of David, according to the flesh, is over all, God blessed for ever. In that hour angels began the noblest of their anthems ; and shall we, whose nature he assumed in preference to theirs, be insensible to the glory of his character, or to the sovereignty of his love ?

Jesus passed through the stages of childhood, that he might set us an example of those virtues, which are the fairest ornaments of infancy. He was indeed a holy child. To the babe of Bethlehem, hoary age, as well as blooming childhood, may look as a pattern. Never did idle rage distort that countenance. Never did covetous desire stretch forth these hands, and never did the language of folly disgrace these lips. “ He increases in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man.” His little hands were stretched out to God, and his tears and his cries were consecrated to pity and love.

You think with indignation on the conduct of the inhabitants of Bethlehem ; but, alas ! into how many

hearts is he still refused admission. There is room for the most childish follies, and for the basest passions, but none for him. Such, O Christian, was the case, even with thy heart, till he expelled his rivals, and took possession of it as his. Admire his grace, who said, "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell."

Let us learn from this scene, no longer to complain that we do not obtain the comforts which we imagined we had a title to expect ; that we are repelled from the door which we thought would be opened to us in all the kindness of hospitality ; and that we are left to struggle, unsupported, amid straits and difficulties which we supposed others would gladly have shared with us. Think of Mary and her child, and learn sobriety in your hopes, and patience amid the disappointments of life. While the inn perhaps was resounding with the carousal of intemperance, and wanton insolence was raising the laugh at Joseph and his companion,—contentment and hope soothe the humble family in the stable, and angels would gladly have brought them the down of the palace for their pillow.

Fret not, ye mothers, that the children on whom ye so fondly doat, are so scantily provided with what is necessary for their comfort. There was not a babe in Palestine more forlorn, to outward appearance, than the infant Saviour ; yet the wings of the Almighty were spread over that manger. Think of the providence that decks the lily, and be content with such things as ye have.

But I hear from the communion table, lamentation and bitter weeping. It is nature mingling its tears with those of devotion. It is "Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not." Had my child been spared to me, its smiles and its prattle would have cheered my poor abode, and with it in my bosom I would have forgotten the hardness of my bed ; but scarce had I wrapped it in swaddling clothes, ere I was called to wrap it in its shroud ;

I have laid it in its coffin, and my heart cleaves to its dust. "But thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for there is hope in thine end, that thy children shall come again to their own border." Canst thou behold God not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up to torture and death for us all, and repine that he hath taken thy babe to himself? The Saviour in glory hath not forgotten the days of his childhood; and, remembering the manger and the slaughter of Bethlehem, he looks with an eye of tender interest on the infant's cradle, and on the infant's grave. How affecting to the heart are the graves of the little children of the good! On them I see the buds of the rose of Sharon opening; and this is the inscription which Christ hath written on the stones which tell where they lie, to teach hope to parents, and piety to childhood: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

ADDRESS XXIII.

LUKE xii. 50.

"I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

How aptly, Christians, doth this language point out the extremity of those sufferings which you are now commemorating! Meditate on that accumulation of trouble which rendered Christ's soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; which made him bow the head, and give up the ghost. Behold him oppressed and af-

flicted, wounded and broken, groaning and dying. Well may Jesus say to his followers, "Are ye able to drink of my cup, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am to be baptized?" He went through the flood of sorrow alone; and of the people there were none with him. Compared with the sufferings of Christ, the tortures of the rack and the stake are but light afflictions. O that your minds may be kept from slight thoughts of our Lord's sufferings! The pains of hell will one day teach those who make light of the sufferings of Christ, somewhat of the anguish that He endured. It is your mercy, Christians, to learn it, from the declarations of his word, from your deliverance from the wrath to come, from the memorials of his broken body and shed blood, from putting your finger into the print of the nails, and from thrusting your hand into his side. Many an anxious heart hath sighed, "What shall I do in the swellings of Jordan?" But when our Redeemer passed through them, how vast and impetuous was the stream! The windows of heaven and the fountains of the great deep were opened, and sent forth their darkest waters to increase its violence. "Save me, O God," the Mediator cried, "for the waters are come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Let not the water flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up."

Tremendous, however, as this baptism was, Jesus was straitened till it was accomplished. His consent to obey and suffer in our stead, was not yielded in a rash or reluctant manner. He heard the proposal of his Father, "Whom shall we send? and, who will go for us?" And, completely aware of all the consequences of his answer, he said, "Here am I; send me." Nor was this consent ever for one moment the subject of his regret. Of all the sighs that heaved our Saviour's breast, and of all the tears that flowed down his cheeks, there was not one to which we could ascribe a language like

this, "O that I had left guilty man to his fate!" His resolution remained firm amidst the solicitations of friendship, and the plots of his enemies, the threats of hell, and the gathering storms of his Father's wrath. Once, and but once, his human nature seemed to shrink; but love to his Father and to our souls made him add, with the same breath with which he had requested the removal of the cup, "Not my will, but thine be done." "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." Mild acquiescence, unshaken fortitude, and love stronger than death, shone forth in the suffering Saviour, and shed beauty and splendour over the horrors of the scene. Never did the captive long so earnestly for the day of his release, nor the warrior for that of his triumph, as Jesus did for the period, when he could say, "the hour is come." How admirable was the firmness expressed by our Lord in the presence of the Jews, in announcing his sufferings: "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? But for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name." Father, glorify thy name, even in my sweat of blood, and in my deadly sorrow; for its glory is dearer to me than life to my body, honour to my character, or joy to my heart. Thy glory is supreme in all my plans and wishes.

Christians, have ye been baptized into Christ's death? Have you felt its attracting and sanctifying influence? Have you no hope but what it justifies, no plea but what it suggests, and no glory but what it inspires? Are your robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? Do you feel a desire for his presence, which nothing but communion with him will satisfy? and an ardour in holiness, which no difficulties nor temptations have been able to extinguish? Are you pressing into the kingdom of God? "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

This view of Jesus ought to raise your hearts to the warmest transports of gratitude and affection. Lord Jesus, precious art thou to me in thy dyed garments, and thy breaking heart ; for these garments were dyed in the blood of my enemies, and that heart was broken for me. Rejoice, O my soul, that heart lives, and feels, and triumphs for me. Lord Jesus, precious art thou to my soul, in thy burning eagerness to endure these sufferings, by which guilty sinners were to be redeemed. Can I turn to thy longing eyes, and ardent heart, and doubt whether my salvation is dear to thee ? Can I look to them, and forbear to cry out with my whole soul for the living God ? Can I look to them, and cease to follow hard after thee ? Can I look to them, and bear for a moment the thought of forsaking thee, or living without thee ? If he who lays down his bodily life for another, is considered as performing the highest act of friendship—if it is an act of love so singular, that history has recorded the instances of it as wonders,—what shall we think of him who gave not only his body to crucifixion, but his soul to the most dreadful anguish of the second death, for us ? If the charity is admired which makes a few objects happy,—and beyond a few human beneficence cannot go, and in its ministration how little personal toil or suffering are requisite,—what shall we think of him, whose love aimed at the happiness of millions, and led him through the pangs of death, and through the sorrows of hell, to save us ? The blessings of those that were ready to perish have come upon him ; and this is the sum of them all, that he sorrowed to death to redeem their lives from destruction. The mourner's heart has sung for joy ; and this has been the theme of his song, that the heart of Jesus was broken for the healing of his. Shall our love to such a Saviour be feeble ? or shall it ever wax cold ? To other objects,

age may chill my heart, and from them death shall withdraw it ; but I will carry the kindness of youth into the decline of my days, and the fire of heaven shall burn amid the damps of death.

Let the ardour of Jesus, in his sufferings, teach us to suffer with alacrity. " In the world ye shall have tribulation." When Providence intimates to you, that reproaches and afflictions await you, say not, " I pray thee have me excused." Thou knowest my weakness ; why should I be called to suffer, while others around me are exempted ? Cannot the interests of my soul be promoted without these severities ? Let us rather exclaim, At thy command we plunge into the stream. Thou wilt hold us up : and thou wilt not suffer the waters to overwhelm us, nor the stream to go over our souls. " The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters." Behold how David acted in such a situation : " Deep called unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts ; all thy waves and billows go over me ; yet the Lord will command his loving-kindness to be with me in the day-time, and his song to be with me in the night." The warrior goes with alacrity to the field where he expects to triumph ; and shall not we go with cheerfulness, where we shall be more than conquerors ? The lingering looks, and the fearful shiverings, the loud murmurs, and the firm grasp of every object on the bank which will strengthen their resistance to the force which impels them into the stream, are a proof that the influence of the cross is either unknown, or very feeble.

Rejoice that he who thus drank of the brook in the way, is now lifting up his head. Look from the Lamb of God bleeding on the altar, to the Lamb triumphing in the midst of the throne. Look from Jesus sinking in the flood of sorrow, to Jesus standing on the heights of Sion ; from Jesus anticipating approaching suffering, to Jesus anticipating eternity of happiness ; from Jesus longing for the time when he should die to save you, to Jesus longing for the time when you shall

die to be with him ; and from Jesus strengthening you to suffer by his words, and by his example, to Jesus guiding you to rivers of pleasure, and wiping away all tears from your eyes. Live and die under the influence of such appeals to your gratitude, such motives to duty, and such incitements to hope. And may you be monuments of the power of his grace, and of the stability of His friendship, “ who loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water through the word, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.”

ADDRESS XXIV.

LUKE xvi. 5.

“ How much owest thou unto my Lord ? ”

LET every communicant consider this question as proposed to himself. I speak not of the temporal bounties of the Redeemer, though it is he who gives us all things richly to enjoy, not because they are unworthy of notice, but because they have no glory in comparison with spiritual blessings in heavenly places. What answer are you returning to this question ? I owe him the blotting out of my immense debt to the law and justice of God. It was exacted of him, and he paid it. “ He restored that which he took not away.” It is to him I owe the cheering voice which makes me lift up my heart with joy ; “ I am pacified to thee for all that thou hast done.” He taught me to view God as my friend. I saw the mercy of God shining in the face of Jesus, and heard his kindness speaking in his voice.

I owe to Him the life which animates my soul. I was lying in my blood, and he passed by and said to me, "live." My soul was dead in sin ; and he gave me the life of God. My soul was under the bondage of corruption ; but "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death."

To Him I owe the white raiment that covers me ; for the best robe was procured by his obedience, and I was arrayed in it by his grace. O glorious robe ! superior in beauty and splendour to that worn by Adam in paradise, nay even to those in which angels stand around the throne. "Being justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," who lived and died to bring in everlasting righteousness.

To Him I owe the graces of the Spirit : Faith, with all its victories ; hope, with all the purity which it produces ; love, with all its labours ; peace, with all its comforts ; meekness, with all the security which it gives, and the good will which it conciliates ; repentance, with its sacrifices ; and patience, with its perfect work. It is from the Spirit of Christ that these graces come ; to his throne they lead us ; and they live and act by him.

To Him I owe all my gracious intercourse with God ; for "He suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." To Him thou owest every ray of his countenance, and every proof of his kindness, every assurance of his love, and all those happy moments of thy life in which thou didst almost think thyself caught up to paradise.

To Him thou owest thine escape from raging enemies. "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick." By him our courage was supported, and the assault repelled.

To Him thou owest the exceeding great and precious promises, those treasures of durable riches, and wells of living water. We cannot see the promises in their riches, and their stability, their influence on consolation,

and on purity, unless we view them in their relation to Jesus.

To Him thou owest all the comforts that have soothed and cheered thee. Man of sorrows, "thou anointedst my head with oil, and my cup runneth over." "Holy One of God, whom I made to serve with my sins, and wearied with mine iniquities," thou loadest me daily with thy benefits, and every moment I feel the kindness of thy hand.

To Him thou owest all thy answers to thy prayers. It is the smoke of his incense which ascends with the sigh of devotion; it is his language, "Father, I will," which combines with thy voice of entreaty; it is the memorials of his sufferings, joining with the pouring out of thy complaint, which procure thee help from the sanctuary, and strength out of Zion. "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him from all his distresses."

How, Christians, are your hearts affected with this review! "What am I, and what is my father's house, that thou has brought me hitherto?" "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" O that I could render him love with all my soul, strength, and mind, gratitude which will sing of his mercy for ever, imitation in all his steps, and obedience to all his laws. For you the cup of salvation is mingled; and for you the bread of heaven is prepared.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Is this your reply, Lord, that I may be freed from corruption, and that I may be holy as thou art holy? Oh that impatience may never fret, that impurity may never burn, and that enmity may never rage in this heart any more. Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, rather than that it should be defiled by corrupt communication; and let my heart be cold in the

grave, rather than that it should be set on fire of hell. To you, Jesus answers, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Is this your reply, Lord, that I may be comforted in trouble? You do well in not saying, Lord, I wish that I may be kept completely free from trouble. In your first entrance on the Christian life, you could not but mark the pillar which you passed by, for it was too conspicuous to be unnoticed. Your attention was so forcibly directed to it, that you could not advance without reading its inscription; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." Jesus could have saved you from every pang; but his wisdom and his love are conspicuous in your sorrows. It is by the sufferings of your lot that your virtues are tried. It is in the scene of conflict, that the noblest displays of Christian excellence are made. It is here that the consolations of religion are felt in all their power, and that the heart sighs most fervently for its everlasting rest. Fix your eyes on a suffering Redeemer. A view of Christ sleeping in the fishing-boat, will check the repinings of poverty, as well as the extravagance of riches. A view of Christ in the garden, and on the cross, will hush to silence the clamours of pain and sorrow. The contemplation of Christ's meekness and gentleness, amid the reproaches of his enemies, and the waywardness and prejudices of his disciples, will raise us above the contempt of the proud, and teach us to bear, with mildness and patience, the difficulties with which we must struggle in the house of our friends. A look at Christ in the grave, will make us say, I will lie down, and sleep in peace, where the Lord lay.

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Is this your answer, Lord, that I may be safe in death?

To you Christ saith, "Fear not to go down to the valley of the shadow of death, for I will go with you, and I will surely bring you up again." Death is to you a release. It is to you a day of discharge and redemption. When, therefore, the guarded hints of your physician intimate, that your disease is baffling his skill,—when the burst of lamentation from those to whom you are dear, convinces you that they understand your situation,—when, in your fluttering pulse, your shaking limbs, and your failing heart, you have the sentence of death in yourselves; "lift up your heads with joy, for the day of your redemption draweth nigh." It will be to you the best of days,—the day which finds you on earth, and places you in heaven.

"What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Is this your answer, Lord, that I may find mercy of thee in the day of judgment? "When God rises up, what shall I say? When he visits, what shall I answer?" How can I stand before the Son of man? The terrors of that scene will loosen the joints of my loins, and make my knees to smite one against another. But the love which will soften the majesty of the Judge's countenance, shall tranquillize and strengthen you. "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," and with you he shall never part. Memory will not then overwhelm you with recollections of horror: for Christ has purified it from dead works. Conscience, then, shall not lift up its voice against you: nay, in its testimony it shall echo back your Lord's approbation. Your good works, which you blush to look at, on account of their scanty number, and their many imperfections, shall be accepted in the Beloved; and amidst all the horrors of a dissolving universe, it shall be seen that "the righteous hath an everlasting foundation."—"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, for this is your reasonable service."—You owe him returns of devoted at-

tachment, unwearied obedience, and superlative praise, the payment of which only commences here, and shall be carried on through eternity. O happy eternity, in which to me my Saviour shall be all !

ADDRESS XXV.

LUKE xviii. 31—34.

“ Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully treated, and spit upon. And they shall scourge him, and put him to death. And they understood none of these things ; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things that were spoken.”

THESE minute and solemn predictions of our Lord's sufferings, his disciples, when they heard them delivered, could neither relish nor understand. The idea of a temporal Messiah made their minds revolt from such scenes of suffering. Shall he be delivered to the Gentiles, who, we hope, “ shall subdue the Heathen under us, and the people under our feet ?” Shall he be mocked, and spitefully treated, whom we have acknowledged as the Christ, the Son of the living God, and to whom the prophets have said that every knee shall bow ? Shall that face be spit on, the majesty of whose looks hath checked the insolence of the rude, and the benignity of whose smile is fitted to win every heart ? Shall he be scourged, on whom, according to prophecy, “ the foe shall not exact, nor shall the son of wickedness afflict him ?” Shall he be put to death, whom we have seen the superior, the plague, and the conqueror of that enemy of

man? By such reasonings, their faith was shaken, and their hearts were perplexed.

Christians, do your hearts turn away in aversion from the cross of Christ? or do they glow with affection to the sufferer, and with wonder at the glories of his death, which shed a splendour over the various indignities that attended it? Do you assent to the truth, "ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Are you convinced that this was absolutely necessary for the expiation of your sins, and for your everlasting salvation? Christ was delivered to the Gentiles, mocked and scourged, and put to death, because you deserved to be given up to the tormentors, to be clothed with shame, to be broken in pieces by God's rod of iron, and to be punished with everlasting destruction. Contemplate Christ thus suffering, and see what an evil and bitter thing sin is; the awful hazard of a state of nature; the terrors of the wrath of God; and the necessity and value of the atonement of Christ. I will look at these objects, till my pride is humbled, and till my cold and careless heart glows with holy feeling. I can have no true peace, till I obtain "redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace?"

"Christ came to his own, and his own received him not." Nor did strangers deal with him more kindly. The best friend of our race, the grand ornament of our nature, was like Ishmael in this respect, that every man's hand was against him. "Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, who came at thy call, not to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together." I confess, with regret and shame for my folly, that once, I was not merely indifferent but hostile to him; now my heart and my flesh cry out for the living Saviour. Thine am I, O Lord Jesus, and on thy side: and the vow of this day shall be continuance in thy love, fidelity to thy cause, and submission to thy will.

But how were your views of a suffering Saviour changed? It was by the wisdom which came from above, in whose light I saw, from the perfections of the divine character, that God could not but demand an atonement for sin, and that this atonement must be of infinite value. I saw that it would have been unsuitable to the dignity of such a messenger as Jesus, to appear on earth for objects of temporary moment. Eternity shall display the influence of his last hour. The Spirit led, and now leads me to the cross, and in his light I see its end and its glories.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Can you think on the Redeemer subjecting himself to all these indignities and sufferings on your account, and not feel a stronger sense than ever of his love? You admire the generosity of the man who subjects himself to obloquy, to maintain your good name unimpeached; or who steps in betwixt you and the blow of anger or revenge. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend." But all that Christ endured was for enemies, enemies to God in their minds, and by wicked works. Historians have celebrated the men who have died for their country. They have painted the cruelties to which they cheerfully submitted for their country's interest and glory, and called on generation after generation to weave fresh laurels round their statues. And must not they be devoid of sensibility to all that is noble and generous in character, whose soul never swells, and whose eye never kindles at a scene, where a grace shone which still fills all heaven with astonishment, and which shall live in the records of every heart in glory?

Reflect, Christians, on the blessings which you derive from the sufferings of our Lord. He was delivered into the hands of his enemies, that you might ascend to his

Father, and his God. He was mocked and spitefully treated, and spit upon, that your head might be exalted with honour. He was scourged, that by his stripes you might be healed ; and he died, that you might live for ever ; died on a cross, that you might reign in glory. The ideas you should form of his love are, that it exceeds comparison, and that it passeth knowledge ; and the feelings you should cherish with regard to his salvation, are those of ardent gratitude and rapturous admiration ; and the returns you should make to him are, a heart wholly devoted to Him, and an eternity spent in his service.

Beware of dishonouring and crucifying Christ afresh by unworthy conduct. Never betray Christ's cause and truths into the hands of enemies, through cowardice or simplicity. Let not a blasphemous thought lodge in your hearts. Defile not your garments with the pollutions of the world, and let no corrupt communication proceed from your mouths ; for if you act an opposite part, you will put him to an open shame. There are some " who trample under foot the Son of God, who count the blood of the covenant with which he was sanctified an unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace." Am I a monster, you say, that I should do such things ? " What, O Jesus, are those wounds in thine hands ? These with which I was wounded in the house of my friends." Why is thy back furrowed ? It is, because oppression and cruelty have plowed on it. Why is thy side pierced ? It is, because insolence and unbelief have thrust into it their spear. Why dost thou groan ? I hear him answering, " I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed under its sheaves. I am broken with their whorish heart, that departeth from me." Why does thy face frown with indignation ? It is, because the rapine and sensuality of some, who call themselves thy disciples, have made strangers abhor the religion of purity and grace, and curse its compassionate Author as the spoiler's Lord.

Submit with calmness to the afflictive incidents of life. There is ruin in a wicked man's success, for "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them ;" in his profits, for he gains the world, and loses his own soul ?" in his honours, for he is set on slippery places ; and in his death, for "the wicked is driven away in his wickedness." But there is gain in a good man's persecutions : "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, for great is your reward in heaven." There is gain in his afflictions, "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory." There is gain by his losses : "Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left houses, or lands, or parents, or wife, or children, for my sake, but shall receive in this life an hundred fold, and in the world to come life everlasting." There is gain in his death : "This is a faithful saying, If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with him ; and if we suffer, we shall also reign with him."

ADDRESS XXVI.

LUKE xxii. 28—30.

"Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom."

SUCH was the language of affectionate approbation which Christ addressed to his disciples, and such was the cheering prospect which he set before them. The heart feels peculiar complacency in a tried friend, in

one who has clung to our side amidst misfortunes, reproach, and danger ; and thus had our Lord's disciples acted, and the applause of their Master at this moment would more than compensate all the anxieties and toils through which they had followed him.

Is this enconium applicable to you ? Have you gone out to Christ without the camp, bearing his reproach ? Hath your adherence to his cause remained unshaken, amidst the afflictions of the gospel ? Would you rather continue with Christ in his temptations, than with the sluggard on his couch, the worldling in his pleasures, or the warrior in his triumphs ? Are your ears closed against all solicitations to quit him ? Is this your firm determination, Though all men should forsake thee, yet will not I ? Do you watch with care against the influence of an evil heart of unbelief, which would lead you to depart from him ? Do you tremble, not merely at the idea of falling away into the opening defection of the audacious apostate, but at the thought of sinking into coldness in secret devotion, and carelessness in meditation on Jesus ? Give me, O Lord, I beseech thee, a mind stayed on thee.

To such pious souls Jesus saith, " I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." A throne and a crown, a sceptre and a palace, treasures incorruptible, robes that wax not old, and an inheritance that fadeth not away, are yours. Christ's throne and crown, his sceptre and palace, his treasures, and robes, and heritage, shall be shared with you. Far superior to the jealousy, selfishness, and scorn, which admit others to no share of their advantages, Christ deems his happiness completed by his people's participation. " The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." " These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." The smiles of my Father are sweeter to me, because my people shall share them. The honours of my kingdom are more pleasing, because my people appear with me

in glory, More valuable to me are my conquests, since they have taught my people to overcome. I delight in this throne, because on it there is a place for them, and in these robes, since over them their skirts are spread. I delight the more in this joy, because I can call them to enter into it.

“The liberal soul deviseth liberal things.” Never was there a soul so liberal as that which the Redeemer made an offering for the sins of many. Never were devices so liberal as his, who hath purposed in his heart that his people should be filled with all the fulness of God.

What, Christians, hath led you to the table of Jesus? Is it to shew that you are on the Lord’s side, and that you are resolved to continue so? Is it to bring yourselves under new pledges of adherence to him, that in the hour of temptation you may say, “O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord.” “I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.” Are these the feelings of your souls? What wonderful grace is it in my Lord, to reward a constancy which he himself hath produced, and thus to throw a vail over my thoughtless wanderings! What astonishing grace is it in my Saviour, to promise a throne to one worthy of the lowest hell! O astonishing grace! he promises to share his kingdom with one who deserved the chains of darkness, the cup of trembling, and the everlasting fire of evil angels. The Master is come, and calleth for such humble souls. Before honour is humility. Approach his presence, saying, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God, and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever.”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.” Christians, ye shall eat and drink with him at his table in his kingdom. Here you eat and drink with him at his table, but it is in the house of your pilgrimage. You receive only a few crumbs of the bread of life, and a few drops of its water. You eat and drink with him in haste, having your loins girded, and your staff in your hands. You eat and drink with him at his table, in the presence of your enemies, who are watching for an opportunity to assault you. Here, while you eat and drink with him, you often mingle your draught with weeping, and are fed with the bread of sorrows. But above you shall eat and drink with him at his table in his Father’s house; with the fatness of that house you shall be abundantly satisfied; and of the rivers of his pleasure you shall freely partake. You shall sit down to that feast in a state of perfect security and rest, for no foe shall be there to annoy, no interruption shall be there to grieve, no satiety shall be there to disgust, and no fear shall be there to disquiet.

Meditate, Christians, on the grounds on which you may expect this honour and felicity. Christ appoints it to you. It is destined for you in that covenant which is everlasting, ordered in all things and sure. Of the seal of that covenant you have now been sharing; and as sure as your Lord is in glory, so shall all his followers be in their order. Nay, “you are raised up already, and made to sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus,” as your Head and Forerunner. Your expectations are founded, not on the words of a man, that may lie or repent. They are not the suggestions of fancy, or of presumptuous anticipation. Were this the case, where you expected plenty, you might find no-

thing ; where you looked for a gracious welcome, you might be rejected ; and where you thought a throne awaited you, the pit might swallow you up : but your hopes rest on a basis that cannot be shaken, and they shall never make you ashamed. O blessed covenant ! my Lord's support in his temptations, and my security in mine. While I contemplate it, my complaints, my doubts, and my fears, pass away, my soul abounds in joy ; and faith, triumphing in Christ, shouts forth these charming words, " The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but thy kindness shall not depart from me, neither shall the covenant of thy peace be removed."

Now, Christians, suffer ye the word of exhortation : " Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that shall remain in you, ye shall continue in the Son, and in the Father." " If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Let the prospects of the gospel raise you superior to the vain show of the world, and impress you with the baseness of vice. Act and feel as becomes those whom God hath called to glory and to virtue. Ascend not the chair of the scorner, neither sit at the table of the sensual, who rise up early in the morning to follow strong drink, and continue until night till wine inflame them. Let me not eat of their dainties, nor be influenced by their spirit. Better are the retreats of obscurity, and the languors of solitude, the bread and water of affliction, and the utmost straits of indigence, with the hopes of religion, than all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, without them.

We dismiss you with the words of the apostle Jude ; and admonitions more necessary and suitable, more important, and more affectionate, it is impossible to conceive. O may they find in you a mind wise to understand them, a conscience that feels their authority, and a heart inclined to obey them ! " But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in

the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.'

ADDRESS XXVII.

LUKE xxiii. 34.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

THESE words call on you, Christians, to contemplate the brightest example of generosity that ever was exhibited on earth. The pious mind loves to consider the graces and virtues which were exemplified by the dying Saviour, as well as the blessings which were procured by his sufferings. While you listen to this prayer, this will be your desire, Oh that this mind dwelt also in me!

Who is it that offers up this prayer? It is not the language of a man of a stern and obdurate soul, on whom good or bad treatment makes little impression; who, wrapt up in his own conscious dignity, considers it as unworthy of a great mind to be much moved by either. But the Son of man had a heart peculiarly soft and tender. The ministrations of sincere attachment drew forth the expressions of his complacency. The kindness that received him into its house, the attention which sat at his feet, and the hosannahs of applauding children, he marked with delight. On the other hand, his heart was alive to reproach and to injury, and deeply felt the ingratitude and the malice which they breathed.

This prayer beautifully corresponds with the title here given to our Lord, "Jesus." They murder Him: He

prays for them. What man who heard this prayer, could imagine that it issued from a heart breathing slaughter ! It is a prayer full of a Saviour's spirit, and rich in the blessings of salvation. It is not the prayer of an angel hovering by the cross, a being superior to human weakness and passions, but of one who was in all things made like unto his brethren, yet without sin ; and who hath shewn himself as glorious in the generosity of his prayers, and in the kindness of his spirit, as in the lessons of his wisdom, and in the miracles of his power.

This prayer he addresses to his Father. Jesus was at this moment enduring the wrath of God, as well as the cruelty of man ; yet faith and love operate strongly within him. His heart clings to Him who was then bruising him, and putting him to grief. Not all the sorrows of death which were compassing him about, not all the pains of hell which were taking hold on him, could shake his confidence in God. He looked to the Judge that punished him as a Father ; and to the cup of trembling as mingled by a Father's hand. The murderers of Jesus were sinning against his Father, as well as against himself ; and in his view their crime was atrocious. Jesus felt at this moment the wrath which sin deserves, and he generously prays, that his insulting enemies might never feel it.

Your Lord, Christians, hath taught you, by his example, to say, " Our Father which art in heaven." If it is soothing to the heart in the hour of sickness and sorrow, to ask the sympathising ministrations of relations, it must be more soothing to implore the help of Him, whose love to us no human affection can equal, and whose relation to us is infinitely closer than that which is formed by the dearest ties of nature. If the language of tenderness from the lips of a sick friend melts the heart, will God despise the claims of sincere and holy affection ? " Wilt thou not, from this time forth, cry unto me, My Father ?"

The blessing which Jesus asks, is forgiveness. Pardon releases the offender from the punishment due to his crime. If the murder of a fellow creature is considered as a most heinous offence,—if to kill a monarch brings on the traitor the severest tortures which man can inflict on man,—what vengeance must not they have deserved, who slew the Prince of life? The vengeance of eternal fire was their doom, and from this Jesus lifts up his voice to save them. He asks the pardon, not only of this sin, but of all their other offences; and as forgiveness is a blessing which is always associated with the things which accompany salvation, we consider him as soliciting for them grace and peace. They treat me as a criminal, but, O God, let them find acceptance in thy sight. Let them see and feel their sin, but let them share in the happiness of those “whose transgressions are forgiven, and to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.” They are exulting in my destruction; I wish to rejoice in their salvation. Our Lord was now offering up that sacrifice by which sin was expiated; and in praying for forgiveness to them, he asks a pledge of the honour that should be conferred on him, and the happiness which he would bestow, when God exalted him with his right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins to Israel. Jesus wished, that where men were gratifying their malice to the uttermost, and shewing that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel, God might, in the salvation of his enemies, pass by, and proclaim his name to be “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, keeping mercy for thousands.”

Let us think of the persons for whom Jesus implores forgiveness. He asks it, not only for those who had fixed him to the cross, but for those whose sentence had devoted him to this doom; and for those at whose instigation that judgment was pronounced. When men forgive their enemies, there is often some individual,

whose injurious conduct it costs them a severe struggle to pass by ; but in this prayer, there are no exceptions. When men forgive their enemies, it is often when they have lost all power of avenging themselves ; but Jesus could now have sent forth his lightnings, and scattered his foes. Men are sometimes prompted to forgive by the appearances of repentance in the person who hath injured them ; but the lips of Christ's enemies were at this moment full of cursing and bitterness. The language of forgiveness is seldom heard but from the death-bed. The dying man, who reflects on the multitude of his offences, feels that the sentiments and the purposes of revenge, ill become him who is about to give an account of himself to God, that the sun of life should not go down on his wrath, and "that he shall have judgment without mercy, who hath shewed no mercy?" But Jesus "always did the things that pleased the Father." He had every reason to anticipate the highest approbation of his Father, and the most splendid rewards which he could confer. It was from no selfish consideration, but from the purest spirit of charity, that our Lord thus prayed.

The time when our Lord put up this prayer demands our notice. In the first moments after we have been injured, resentment is strong. The heart can think of nothing but the ill usage we have received ; and to forgive those who have treated them so unworthily, would, if suggested by their best friends, appear to many an act of meanness, and injustice to themselves and to their connections. The proposal would be deemed a proof of lukewarmness in their cause, and of partiality to their opponents. Time must be given for the tumult of passion to subside, ere the still small voice of reason and charity can be heard. But it was immediately after our Lord was fixed to the cross, and when malice had done its utmost against him, that he offered up this prayer.—Nor was this a transient impulse of generosity in the Saviour's bosom. It is mingled with the last throb of

his heart, and it was among his parting injunctions before he went to heaven, "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The conversion of many of his murderers shews the efficacy of this prayer. The three thousand Jews, who on the day of Pentecost gladly received the word, were charged by Peter with having crucified his Master. The victim of their fury, they now honour as the Author of their salvation.

Our Lord urges as a reason for the forgiveness of his enemies, that they knew not what they did. Deceived by the artful misrepresentations of their leaders, and disappointed in their favourite hope of a temporal Messiah, which our Lord's miracles had raised to the highest pitch, they now considered him as an impostor, and were eager to destroy him as one who had cruelly sported with the misery of an oppressed people. Christ pitied their delusion, and in the very place where his acts of piety and beneficence had been most grossly misrepresented, he offers, for the cruelty of his murderers, the only extenuation of which their conduct admitted.

When men meet with injurious treatment, their minds brood on every aggravating circumstance in the conduct of their adversaries. Our Lord might have said to these Jews, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father ; for which of these do you crucify me ? But instead of the language of rebuke and execration, he utters that only of apology and forgiveness.

What think ye, Christians, of this generous conduct ? It is indeed full of grace, and demands the admiration and praise of our whole hearts. May the Holy Ghost give me a more glowing sense of it ! Are you saying, Oh that Jesus would solicit my pardon ! Alas ! I cannot urge that I knew not what I did ; but Oh ! ask it for the sake of thine infinite merit : and may the voice that pleads for my forgiveness announce it. The generous spirit and the precious blood of my Redeemer, encourage my hope of pardon. I have heard the voice of

mercy, and may I this moment hear it ; “ Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

I call you, Christians, to hope in your Saviour’s mercy. Will he, who was thus candid and indulgent to his enemies, be stern and severe to those that love him ? “ He knows our frame, and remembereth that we are dust.” He knows every circumstance which extenuates, or which aggravates our offences. Think how he apologized for the drowsiness of his disciples, “ The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Before a Judge thus pitying and considerate, the feeblest of his saints may appear without dismay.

Let this memorable scene which you have been contemplating, elevate higher than ever your ideas of your Saviour’s character. The most famous moralists of the heathen world inculcated the lawfulness of revenge, and their most celebrated men discovered, when they were treated with ingratitude and cruelty, that neither patriotism nor humanity were powerful enough to suppress their wrath. Often did the dying father leave it as a sacred duty to his child, to avenge his parent’s wrongs ; and denounce his curse against him, if he should ever pity and spare those who had dishonoured him. How shocking is it to see the bosoms of the dying agitated by resentment, and men sinking into the grave, with imprecations in their mouths ! How opposite to all this was the spirit of our Lord ! We have heard of the martyrs forgiving their enemies, and praying for them ; but it was at Calvary that they imbibed that spirit, and it was there they learned that lesson. Give their generosity every due eulogium ; but let it not be exalted to the disparagement of the Saviour’s. What were their wrongs to our Lord’s ? What were their claims to kindness to his ? Tell us, ye martyrs of Jesus, what it was

that softened your hearts? Whence came that generous tear which dropped at the thought of the peril of your bloody persecutors, and that dying prayer, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge?" It was the Spirit of Jesus which wrought mightily in you.

History records numberless instances of men's destroying their enemies; and for this, fame hath held up their names to admiration: but, O Jesus, thy forgiving and saving thine, was a triumph infinitely nobler! Heaven shall give thee its highest seat, gratitude its warmest blessings, and eternity its unwearied praise.

Let this prayer of the dying Saviour incline you to cherish the spirit of forgiveness. What fellowship have the malicious or the revengeful with such a Saviour, and where is their conformity to his death? Say not, if I had deserved the ill usage I have met with, I would be dumb with silence. "But what glory is it, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Say not, I must not give my enemy such a triumph over me. In forgiving him, "you heap coals of fire upon his head." You will turn his enmity into kindness. If it has not this effect, in the estimation of the wise and good, you gain the noblest of all triumphs over him, in overcoming evil with good.

The spirit and maxims of the world are opposed to the temper and the conduct which I am now recommending: but "ye are not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world." Shall the ridicule of fools have

more power over you than the prayer of a dying Saviour ?

Your own peace will be promoted by the spirit of forgiveness, for no passion tortures the heart like revenge. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." "I say unto you, therefore, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you, and do good to them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Beware of shewing reluctance to forgive. There are some who remain deaf to the most urgent intreaties for reconciliation, and no tears can soften their ferocity. The evil spirit keeps his place in the heart ; and if he is at length driven out, it is after a most dreadful struggle. But think how promptly the generous Saviour pardoned his enemies. "Go ye and do likewise."

Delay not your forgiveness till it is solicited. Our Lord said to his disciples, "If thy brother trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him." The disciples thought this so hard a saying, that they said, "Lord, increase our faith," that we may see, and feel in all their force, the motives and reasons of so difficult a duty : but our Lord, when he was dying, asked forgiveness for those who saw not their need of it, and who sought it not for themselves. Pride may demand the submission of an enemy ere we forgive him ; but Christian charity will not suffer such a counsellor to direct or to impede its movement ; and we cannot too quickly suppress the resentful feelings of our hearts.

In fine, beware of acting against the light, and the remonstrances of your own minds. Many a presumptuous sinner rushes on to sin, though he sees the angel of the Lord standing in the way with a drawn sword in his hand ; and many of this description catch the branch where the forbidden fruit hangs, though they know that it will break with them, and that they will fall with it into the pit over which it grows. Stand in awe and sin not, for happy is the man that feareth alway. Venture

not to commit those actions, of the lawfulness and propriety of which you doubt. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left ; remove thy foot from evil."

ADDRESS XXVIII.

LUKE xxiii. 39, 42.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

SUCH was the manner in which the malefactors who were crucified with our Lord accosted him during the awful scene. We think on the language of the first with horror: "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." Never did misery present so strong a claim to thy interposition as now ; and yet thou leavest us to perish unpitied beside thee. The adulation paid thee as a Saviour by multitudes, was the effect of delusion ; for hadst thou aught of that power and mercy which have been ascribed to thee, thou wouldst not permit thyself and us to die in lingering agony. "O save me for thy mercies sake," is a prayer which hath often ascended to the Redeemer, and been graciously answered ; but here it was the language of bitter derision. It was the language of fierce and audacious impiety. It was the spirit of the damned that operated in him, even the spirit which

makes them blaspheme the God of heaven, because of their sores, and refuse to repent of their deeds.

Ye abhor this spirit ; but this is not owing to the superior mildness and discernment of your nature. We ascribe it to his influence, who hath filled you with holy tenderness and godly fear.

But what was the language of the other malefactor to our Lord ? “ Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Insulted and tortured as thou now art, I see a seat preparing for thee on the right hand of the Majesty on high. I hear thy Father’s voice to thee, “ Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.” I see thy foes humbled in the dust, every knee bowing in thy name, and every tongue confessing thy power. “ Look upon me, and prove merciful to me, as thou usest to do to them that love thy blessed name.” It is not my tortured body that interests me, for a few hours will terminate its agonies, but my soul, that is sinking into misery which shall never end, supplicates thy compassionate attention. One gracious thought of thy heart, and one saving effort of thine arm, is all I ask, and is what will make me completely happy.

Have ye, O Christians, ever felt such a wish, and uttered such a prayer ? Is this the language of your hearts ? I can bear to be forgotten by the world, even by my most familiar friends ; but the dread of being forgotten by Jesus is intolerable to me. A place in his heart I value more than all riches, and the desire of my soul is to him, and to the remembrance of his name. I have not violated the laws of men, as this malefactor did ; but how often, O God, have I robbed thee of the time and of the service which were thy due ? It becomes me, therefore, to approach thee with sackcloth on my loins, and dust on my head, and to say, “ I pray thee, let me live.”

Behold, in the kindness of Jesus to this penitent, a pledge of the love which he bears to the contrite. From the midst of sorrow, he casts a look of pity on this suf-

ferer ; plucks this brand from the burning ; raises this child of wrath to happiness and glory ; and gives to all ages a bright demonstration, that he is able to save to the uttermost. He is crucified through weakness, yet mighty to save ; his hands are nailed, yet he breaks the jaws of the wicked one, and takes the spoil from his teeth ; cruelty tortures him, and yet he delighteth in mercy ; he adorns his cross with the triumphs of grace ; and, while passing out of the land of the living, assigns to his fellow-sufferer a place in paradise. Let this sight elevate the desponding to a lively hope, and let it open the closed lips to the highest praise.

In the spirit of this penitent, I encompass thine altar ; and, O God, in the multitude of thy mercy hear me ; and, in the truth of thy salvation, deliver my soul.

The Saviour hath often distinguished the commemoration of his death by the triumphs of his mercy. The spectator who surveys this scene with indifference or scorn, hath no reason to expect the Redeemer's regard. But while Jesus blesses the devout communicant, he has sometimes shewn the riches of his grace to those who, from the consciousness of guilt, durst not approach his table, but raised their earnest cry from his gate.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

O ye who are cast down by the thought, that the Almighty scorns your services ! they indeed deserve his rejection, but be of good cheer, " your prayers and your alms are come up in memorial before God."

Ye whose integrity hath been called in question, and who are mourning that the persons who could have established your innocence are now silent in the grave, be of good courage, " your witness is in heaven, and your record is on high."

To those who are looking back on the morning of life, and sighing at the recollection of the follies of their early

days, Jesus now saith, "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

Christians, when your meetings for religious intercourse are stigmatized as the scene where enthusiasm whines, or where slanders and tumult are hatched, comfort one another with these words: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name."

When your kindness is forgotten even by those whom you have obliged, recollect, that you have a higher motive to influence you than the gratitude of mortals. "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed to his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."

In the hour of distress, this is your privilege, that you may pray, "Lord, remember me and all my afflictions." "Thou tellest all my wanderings, thou puttest my tears into thy bottle; are they not in thy book?" When cold and distant looks, or when peevish and scornful language, shew that your friends think not of you as once they did; and when you stand by the place where silence, darkness, and corruption, testify that the dead know not any thing, pray, "According to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Lord." In thy friendship is all my trust and all my joy.

In the hour of death, let this be your confidence and your prayer, "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me." "Thou art my help and my Saviour, make no tarrying, O my God." He who remembered you in your low estate, will not forget you in the valley of the shadow of death, nor in the depths of the grave. "He will hide you in the grave till his wrath be past; he will appoint you a set time, and remember you." The grave is the land of forgetfulness to man, but your memorial shall be in heaven.

Be zealous, like this penitent, for the honour of your Lord. The name of our Saviour is profaned, his doctrines are opposed, his miracles are ridiculed, and his laws and his ordinances are set at nought around you. Many, from indifference or timidity, are dumb with silence when their Saviour's cause demands their bold defence. Never let gratitude and duty call on you in vain, to raise your Master's honour from the dust. "Stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong." What is there in the insolence of impiety to intimidate you? What can you plead as an apology for your silence, which this man might not have urged? You are not, like him, inclosed by the assembly of the wicked, nor do the sorrows of death compass you about; your offences against the laws of society have not been such as to subject you to the upbraidings of the cruel, who would repel your testimony with reproaches. Your Lord is not now crucified in dishonour; but reigns on high, the possessor of all power in heaven and in earth. "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." "The living, the living, he shall praise thee." In the face of scoffing impiety, and from the feelings of an admiring and grateful heart, say daily and hourly, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Live in the exercise of repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Amiable is that life which they distinguish; and happy is that death which they crown. Repentance will lead to humility and patience, candour and circumspection. Faith will lead to heavenly-mindedness, and zeal, and joy, and praise, and charity. Such are the branches that spring from these trees. May we see them in your lives in all their summer's glory!

Take comfort from the words of our Lord, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Oppose this assurance to the threats of Satan, to the terrors of the

world, and to the sad forebodings of your own hearts. If it is so delightful to be with Jesus for a few moments at his table, if, amidst the joys of his presence, you forget that you are still in the vale of tears, what must the raptures be which shall be felt when you are with him in paradise, the scene of perpetual verdure and of supreme felicity? The period of your translation is at hand, your Saviour longs for its arrival; and the inhabitants of heaven are witnesses with what fervour he prays for it.

Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me, whom I have met in thy way, and whom I have associated at my table, and whose hearts I have formed for myself and for heaven, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory. What can render such a prayer unavailing? "Your life is hid with Christ in God. Ye are sealed to the day of redemption."

ADDRESS XXIX.

LUKE xxiii. 44, 45.

"And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour, and the sun was darkened."

SACRED history presents us with several instances, in which God made the luminaries of heaven signalize, by their uncommon appearance and influences, his interpositions in behalf of his people. He made the sun to stand still on Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, till Joshua had avenged himself on his enemies. He made the shadow to go back ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz, to confirm the faith of Hezekiah in the

prophet's assurances of his recovery. But what were these miracles, in all their glory, to the darkening of the sun at our Saviour's death? Now the Captain of salvation was spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them on his cross. By this supernatural darkness, our faith is confirmed in the virtue of the Mediator's stripes to heal the maladies of our souls.

This darkness was an emblem of the dreadful infatuation of the Jewish people. Though Jesus was possessed of every character by which prophecy had marked out the Messiah, yet because he gratified not their carnal hopes, and conformed not to their illiberal prejudices, they despised and rejected him. They were ashamed of him who is the glory of his people Israel, and demanded his blood, who came not to destroy, but to save.

Christians, ye were once in darkness. You saw no beauty in the Saviour why he should be desired, and no majesty in him why he should be obeyed. But what is your opinion of him now? "He is fairer than the children of men." He is the only foundation of our hope. In excellence he is supreme, and in glory unrivalled.

This darkness leads our minds also to that conflict which was now carrying on betwixt the Son of man and the rulers of the darkness of this world. "Now is your hour and the power of darkness." By suggestions the most gloomy, and by temptations the most horrible, they tried to shake the fortitude of our Lord, and to plunge him in utter despair. It was in your cause that this battle was fought. He encountered these enemies in the height of their malice and strength, that he might make the conquest of them easy to you. He vanquished them, to make you more than conquerors. Those victories are celebrated with peculiar transport, in which the power is broken that was the scourge of humanity, and in which the armies are scattered, which had spread desolation and havoc from kingdom to kingdom. With

what delight do the benevolent set their feet on their withered laurels, and see their banners suspended in the temples of peace ! But no enemies to human happiness can be compared to the gates of hell ; and no songs of victory should be so dear to us as those in which we celebrate our Lord's destroying the works of the devil.

But this darkness more especially represented the gloom which was spread over our Lord's soul, from the absence and the wrath of his Father. " It pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief." No voice comes from the excellent glory to encourage him ; nor was a sound heard from heaven, but the call to Justice to arise and execute the vengeance written. No dove descends and alights on his head, as the emblem of peace and consolation, for the Comforter is not there, and his heart is torn with anguish. The music of nature was hushed to silence while its Creator was in agony, till the returning sun announced that the conflict was over, and raised the voice of triumph from all its borders. Jesus endured all this to procure for you the delights of communion with God, and to save you from the blackness of darkness for ever. Remember, Christians, amidst the enjoyments of the communion table, that to obtain these for you, Jesus felt that dereliction, which he bewails in the most moving lamentation that ever rose from earth to heaven, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?"

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

In your struggles with temptation, recollect the Saviour's last conflict, his courage, perseverance, and victory, and your hands shall be strong, and your hearts undaunted. " Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy ! though I fall, I shall arise ; though I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." Oppose Satan's craft

by the wisdom of the just, his fury by fortitude and zeal, his flattering suggestions by the penitence that knows and feels your imperfections, and his dark forebodings by faith and hope.

O ye who are now exclaiming, "O that I were as in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone on my head, and when by its light I walked in darkness!" be of good comfort, for the horrors to which Jesus submitted entitle you to expect the fulfilment of the promise, "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, who walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself on his God." Take heed lest, by the indiscreet exposure of your secret griefs, you do injury to religion; and go not into the intercourse of society with that face of sadness, which will make men shrink from piety as incompatible with pleasure, and dread it as the ghost that walks amidst terror and gloom.

Christians, walk as children of light. Shew yourselves superior to all solicitations to fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. By benignant candour, repress the malice of the censorious. Oppose a discreet liberality to the scrupulosity of the weak, and the firmness of moral principle to the enticements of sinners. While many follow, as if it were a light from heaven, the wandering fires of a heated fancy, and pronounce you strangers to religious sensibility, because you sympathise not with their raptures, indulge not in bitter reflection on their folly. Point out, in the spirit of benevolence, the dangers they will fall into under the guidance of enthusiasm, and endeavour to counteract the unfavourable ideas which others may be led to form of piety from their extravagances, by shewing out of a good conversation your works with meekness of wisdom.

When you gaze on the heavenly bodies, and say, in the language of devout admiration, "Truly the light is

sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun," think on your Saviour, to whom, in his last hour, they lent not a single ray. His failing eyes saw no sun, and hours before he gave up the ghost, he bade adieu to the light of the living.

In that solemn day, when the light, and the sun, and the moon, and the stars, shall be darkened; when the eye shall be closed to the gaze of friendship, and the ear to the voice of consolation; when death is spreading its shadows around you, remember the gloom of the Saviour's departure. Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. The day-spring from on high shall visit you on the borders of the grave, and show it to you as a place of rest and security.

The awful day shall arrive, when the sun shall become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon red as blood. The sun that mourned with his suffering Creator, shall thus sympathise with nature ere it sinks into ruin, and then pass away from the firmament for ever. Yet amidst all these desolations, your fortitude and triumphant gladness shall remain unshaken. "Your sun shall no more go down, neither shall your moon withdraw its shining, but the Lord shall be your everlasting light, and your God your glory."

Now, my friends, recollect the injunction of our Lord, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven." All pretensions to communion with God are false and detestable, which are made by those that walk in darkness. Let your conduct and temper be graced by increasing benignity, purity, and usefulness, that the world may acknowledge that "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more to the perfect day."

ADDRESS XXX.

LUKE xxiv. 50, 51.

“ And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.”

THESE words lead your minds, Christians, to the ascension of our Lord, and to some interesting circumstances which preceded it. Ere Jesus parted with his disciples, he walked with them a considerable way, to shew them the pleasure which he still felt in their company, and that in a manner familiar and affectionate, he might address to them his parting counsels. Their hearts were agitated with anxious affection. The olive trees were blossoming around them ; the songs of nature at its gayest season were filling the air above them ; but they heard nought except their Master's voice, and they had no eye save for the face which they were soon to see no more.

“ He led them out as far as to Bethany.” This was the place which he had chosen as the spot from which he was to be received up into glory. Here the tears of sympathy had flowed from his eyes, as he went to the grave of Lazarus ; and here he commands the blessing, life that shall never end. At Bethany, the ointment poured on his head and his feet, prepared his body for the burying : now the anointing of the oil of gladness announces his elevation to the throne. It was in a garden near this place, that agonising sorrow laid him in the dust ; and here he rises to the right hand of God, where there are pleasures evermore. He is now leading you to the scene of his sufferings, to shew you what he endured for you ; and when you behold him on Calvary

bowing the head, and giving up the ghost, remember that from that hill his soul went to paradise. When you behold at Bethany the garden where he was in agony, and where his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground, remember that here, in soul and in body, he entered into his joy.

The time of separation is come, and he lifts up his hands. He raises his hands, not to give the signal for the approach of the angels who were to conduct him to glory, but to render his last prayers on earth more solemn in the estimation of his disciples. This was the attitude of intreaty soliciting the blessing, nay, of the majesty that bestows it. He blessed them. The words which he used on this occasion are not recorded, though we may believe that they were engraven on the hearts of the disciples. He asks from his Father, the grace and the consolation which their situation required ; and gave them the sweetest and fullest assurances of his mercy and care, and of their happiness and salvation. What termination could be better suited to his course of beneficence than this? At his birth, angels were heard blessing God, and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men." At his ascension, he is heard encouraging his disciples, and blessing them with peace. This was a circumstance worthy of his benevolence, that his last words were a benediction ; and nothing was so likely to animate the courage and to console the hearts of the disciples, as such a parting. When our friends are gone, memory calls up all the instances of unkind treatment which they received from us to afflict the heart. She will remind us when the heart can ill bear it, of the fretfulness by which we grieved them, and the opposition by which we thwarted their wishes. That his disciples might not make themselves miserable, by reflecting on their unworthy conduct to him, he parted with them in this affectionate manner, to shew them that all was forgiven.

Christians, you are longing for your Saviour's bless-

ing. Hast thou but one blessing? Bless me, even me also, O my Saviour! And can you despair of receiving it? Look to that cross where "he is made a curse for you, that he might redeem you from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon you, and that you might receive the promise of the Spirit."

While he blesses the disciples, he is parted from them. It is not said that he left them, but that he was parted from them, as if not only they, but he himself, felt reluctant to the separation. Gladly would they have detained him, but their interest required that he should go away. With the glow of affection in his heart, and the words of benediction on his lips, he quits the beloved circle. From the soothing offices of friendship, he rises to lead captivity captive; and from the regrets of separation he goes to the welcome of angels, to the blessings of just men made perfect, and to the congratulations of his Father. It was love and pity that had detained him hitherto; but now he must go. He hears the call of angels, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." He hears the cry of the souls from the altar, Why tarry the wheels of his chariot? He hears the voice of his Father, Thy rewards are prepared, sit thou at my right hand.

He is carried up to heaven, not in a chariot of fire, but in a cloud: and, as he ascends, he drops not his mantle, but his blessing. He ascends to all the gladness of his Father's presence, and to all the splendours of his Father's throne. No power could arrest or impede his progress. Amidst the glories which were opening to his view, he still looks in love on the friends whom he had quitted; and he dismisses two of the angels who had come to attend him, and orders them to go back to Bethany with a message of consolation and of hope. Their absence would make no diminution of the splendour of his triumph; yet even if it had done

this, he was willing to relinquish it for the comfort of his followers. And what was their message? "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven; that same Jesus,"—tell them I am still the Saviour, and unchangeable in my love and pity for ever,—“that same Jesus, whom ye have seen ascending up into heaven, shall in like manner return, as ye have seen him go up.”

But is Jesus no more in the world? As to his bodily presence, the heavens must retain him; but as to his spiritual presence, he is with his people always, even to the end of the world. "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto you, and I will bless you. And can he be absent from a scene where his death is remembered? Will he withhold his blessing from melting penitence and eager devotion? "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and come down!" "God be merciful to us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us." Behold he comes, and it is to bless you. I see in his uplifted hands, and in the light of his countenance, the prelude to the blessing. And canst thou leave heaven for me? My heart springs forth to meet thee; and hast thou a blessing for a creature so mean and so unworthy as I am? He hath blessings unnumbered; blessings precious as those of Bethany; blessings even for the chief of sinners that comes to God by him.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Since the Saviour hath ascended to heaven, let your hearts follow him. Can any thing attract you to earth more strongly, than the glory of the Saviour draws you to heaven? He delights to meet your hearts there. Hath the communion of his table raised no desire after the marriage-supper of the Lamb? Hath seeing him through a glass darkly, excited no wish in you to see him as he is? Can you idolize a world which he van-

quished, and turn away your eyes from a heaven to which he soared? Many are the burdens which press down the heart. The cares, the enjoyments, and the sorrows of earth, have often this effect, even on those most devoted to the Redeemer. This grovelling tendency of the heart is the grief of the pious, and many a tear falls on the dust in which they lie. O ye who are now complaining, "My soul cleaveth to the dust;" behold the Saviour's hand is stretched down to elevate you. Taking hold of this hand, you shall mount up as on eagles' wings, enter into the holiest of all, join with the blessed in the high praises of your God, and taste of the banquet at which they rejoice for ever.

But I hear a pious soul lamenting, "The Saviour, in whose presence I was so happy, is gone; and had he left me as he parted with the disciples, I could have borne the separation; but the last view which I had of his face, I saw it covered with a frown; he raised his hands, but it was to thrust me from his presence; and his words to me were those of reproach." I call thee to humble thyself under his hand, on account of that indulgence of folly and corruption in thy heart, which provoked and grieved him. "Who knows but he will turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind him?" "For the iniquity of his covetousness I smote him. I hid me and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart." O my God, save me from such guilt and folly. If I must live without thy presence, let me walk humbly in the bitterness of my heart in thy ways. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will restore comfort to him and to his mourners."

Look forward to the separation which will soon take place between you and the friends whom you love; and when the period comes, leave them as our Lord parted with his disciples. Your parting counsels will never be forgotten. It is indeed a most solemn and affecting scene, when a departing son or daughter are heard imploring blessings on the grey hairs of their father and

their mother, and calling on brothers and sisters to give their hearts to Him who will prize the kindness of their youth. It is a scene perhaps still more solemn and affecting, when the death-bed of a parent is surrounded by his children, and when from it are heard the consolations which shall soothe their sorrows, the admonitions which will guard their virtue, and the promises which will animate their hope. The trembling hands are lifted, and the closing lips are opened, to leave their last blessing. That voice will speak when you are in the grave ; and that blessing will return into your own bosoms in the land of glory. For such an exercise, much fortitude, and self-command, and wisdom, are necessary : it is not the timid, whom the terrors of death are confounding,—nor the feeble-minded, whom the anguish of surrounding friends is overpowering,—nor the selfish, who can think only of themselves, who will leave the world as our Lord did. Cherish the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Cherish it for the work of life, and for the duties of death.

Imitation of this exercise of our Lord by dying Christians, glorifies God, as it shews the confidence which his people place in his promises and mercy ; and it is most soothing to parents themselves. When the burden is cast on the Lord, the heart feels relieved. The heart which hath so often throbbed with parental anxiety, must soon be cold and senseless. These eyes, which have so often been fondly fixed on their children, must soon be sealed up in darkness ; but for them the Almighty's heart will feel, and for them his eye will watch. It is likely to be useful to children, not only during the solemn scene, but afterwards, when it is recalled to remembrance. Shall I cherish the passions which a dying parent besought me to sacrifice ? Shall I despise that religion which he recommended so earnestly to my regard ? Can I expect to receive the blessings which a dying parent implored for me, if I live without God in the world ? The faltering voice with

which a dying parent prays, will be remembered amid the flatteries of pleasure ; and the confidence in Jehovah's care of us, which he then expressed, will operate in us as a preservative from despair in the most calamitous situation. I know from his dying counsels and prayers, the objects which he valued most, and was most desirous that I should possess ; and these objects I will pursue.

This exercise is adapted to promote the spirit of religion in the world. When the wicked man hears of it, neither feeling nor conscience will permit him to make it his jest. He cannot but think how different his parting will be. Can I pray to God to bless my children, when my example has taught them to curse him ? Can I ask him to prosper them in things temporal, when I have taught them the habits of dissipation and excess ? Can I entreat him to adorn them with the graces of religion, and with the spirit of purity, when I have made these the objects of my ridicule, and my invective ? Can I pray that I may meet them in heaven, when I know that I am in the broad way that leads to destruction ? Such reflections as these must damp his boldness in a vicious course of life, and shew a strong tendency to lead to that change in principle, and in conduct, without which no man shall see the Lord.

Rejoice that the ascension of Christ secures your admission to heaven in due time. The breaker is gone up before you, and every obstacle is removed from the way. The time of the departure of some of you may be at hand. In that hour the eye of nature will see nought opened before you but the grave ; but the eye of faith will behold the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God. The eye of nature will see no messenger approaching to call you away except death ; but the eye of faith will behold the Son of man coming to receive you to himself, that where he is, there you may be also. He will gild the

cloud that is spread round your departing spirit : and instead of the sound of the trumpet with which he went up, you shall hear his own voice saying, “ Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” And can you linger while thus called to depart ? What is your place among men, to the throne that is prepared for you among the spirits of the just ? If this walk of the disciples with our Lord was such a privilege, what must it be to walk with him in white ? That walk terminated in a separation, but this can end in none. If Christ’s parting benediction was so delightful, what must his blessing of welcome be ? If it be so sweet to believe his ascension, what must it be to share it, and to behold how high he soared, and how happy he is ?

I call on you, Christians, to worship him as the disciples did ; and to return to your dwellings, and to your duties, with great joy. Let your shouts be joined to the acclamations that celebrate his triumphs, and your wishes to the longings of so many pious hearts, which are desiring to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

ADDRESS XXXI.

JOHN i. 47—51.

“ Jesus saw Nathaniel coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile ! Nathaniel saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me ? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathaniel answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God ; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.”

WHAT an estimable character was that of Nathaniel ! In a few words our Lord conveys to us an idea of excellence, which we admire and love. The encomium proceeds not from a simplicity on which craft had imposed, or from the flattery that delights to lavish applause. It comes from one to whom all things are open, and in whose lips guile was never found.

It is not the character of all religious worshippers. “ Israel compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Judah with deceits.” We hope that you are worshipping God in spirit and in truth. While your lips praise him, do your souls magnify the Lord ? While your feet carry you to his table, do your spirits rise to his throne ? While the gloom of penitence darkens the countenance, is the heart broken ? While you profess that you are not of the world, has the spirit of it ceased to influence your hearts ?

In your intercourse with the world, do you speak the truth, without the fair colourings of flattery, or the black perversions of malice ? Does truth so regulate all your dealings, that the hearts of your neighbours

can safely confide in you ? Is your regard to integrity and truth such, that no prospect of ease or impunity can induce you to make a lie your refuge from difficulties, or from dangers ? Of you God says, "Surely it is my people, children that will not lie ; so he was their Saviour." "Who shall abide in thy tabernacle ? The man that speaketh truth from his heart."

How perfect is the knowledge which Jesus has of our most secret actions ! "When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." Our Lord probably refers to some act of secret devotion which Nathaniel was performing, and which was peculiarly interesting to him, from the emotions he had felt in it, or from its influence. Is he now saying to your hearts, When you were first struck with my word, I saw you ? In the lone retreat, where you gave full vent to the flood of penitence, and grasped the promise of mercy with a trembling hand, I saw you. At the communion table, when you joined yourselves to me in a perpetual covenant, I saw you. In the house of mourning, when, amidst the tears of nature, your heart and your flesh cried out for the living God, I saw you. In the hour of urgent temptation, when iniquity tried all its arts to overpower your virtue in vain, I saw you. The nearest place where piety kneels, or gratitude sings, or penitence moans, Christ's eye marks with complacency. The secret chamber, or the thicket, the hole of the rock, or the bank of the streamlet, where religion pours out its heart to Him who seeth in secret, are precious in his sight.

Has this omniscience of Jesus raised in you the loftiest ideas of his character ? "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Rabbi, thou hast the words of eternal life ; and in me thou shalt find a humble and obedient disciple. Son of God, all that Jehovah hath is thine, and angels and men shall honour thee as they honour the Father. King of Israel, I bow to thy sceptre ; rule over me, and dispose of me and of mine as thou pleasest.

In approbation of the candour and pious acknowledgment of Nathaniel, Jesus tells him that he would see in the miracles which he was to work such displays of power and grace, as would more fully evince his Deity and Messialship. In the miracles of Moses, we behold the angel of destruction going forth, and terror, desolation, and death, mark his progress. In the miracles of Christ, we behold the messengers of mercy and peace riding prosperously. Where he treads, righteousness springs up ; where he puts forth his rod, health and life return ; and when he speaks, the hearts of the wretched sing for joy. Angels ascended with him to the mount, where he prayed, and marked a human soul swelling with a devotion more glowing than theirs ; and they came down with him to the haunts of men, where he went about doing good. Angels ascended with him to Tabor, where he shone in glory ; and they went down with him to Gethsemane, where he lay in blood. They ascended with him to the cross, where he finished redemption ; and they went down with him to the tomb of Joseph, where he abolished death.

Is it your wish, Christians, to see his power and his glory ? It is the Son of man whom I desire to see, and without him all the angels in heaven can yield me no rest to my heart. May I see thee, O Jesus, as wonderful in counsel, excellent in working, and rich in mercy.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ O blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sin, and in whose spirit there is no guile.” Hold fast your integrity. The modest graces of candour, simplicity, and truth, however undervalued by many, are far more estimable than specious and glittering qualities which the world admires, such as complaisance of manners, elegance of address, and a disposi-

tion to say smooth things to all with whom we have intercourse. Let the heart be more interested than ever in the services you pay to God. Shew more affection to his word when you read it, more love to his law when you obey it, and more dependence on Christ's death in its commemoration. Let there be more of the heart in your kindness to men, in the tear of sympathy, and the alms of charity, the warnings of fidelity, and the tribute of praise. It is a common slander thrown on the religious, that they are not so averse from fraud and falsehood as from some other sins ; but shew the world, by your conduct, that the religion which teaches you to abhor the excesses of intemperance, and to reprove the language of blasphemy, inclines you to detest every art of falsehood ; and that he who, from the fear of God, will not sit with vain persons, will not go in with dissemblers.

Give Christ the glory of his omniscience. Guard against secret sins. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Beware of forming hasty judgments on the motives and characters of others, and invade not the prerogatives of Him whose work it is to search all hearts. The man you blame for indulgence to the vicious, or severity to the unfortunate, may be actuated by very different motives than a fellow feeling with the impure, or the malignant jealousy which glories in a rival's ruin.

Console yourselves with Christ's approbation, and deem it sufficient that he sees you, though no human eye should mark, and though no human voice should applaud your exertions. Be assiduous in the performance of those secret duties, and in the cultivation of those graces of the hidden man of the heart, which are known to none but him. While others pray, and fast, and give alms to be seen of men, honour him by the sighs and groans of penitence and devotion ; and "let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth."

While you cultivate the spirit, you may rejoice in the

consolations of the faithful, whose excellencies and privileges are set before you in Scripture. Resting on Jacob's pillow, you may say, "I have waited for thy salvation, O God." Taking David's harp, you may sing with him, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." Glowing with Paul's energy, you may say, "I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me." Leaning on Christ's bosom, or standing nigh the cross, like John, you may say, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." Having in you the spirit of righteousness, with Nathaniel, you may say, "Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." "Thou art all fair, my love, and there is no spot in thee."

Christians, you have seen great things to-day, but you have greater still to see. While you live, you will have cause for the prayer, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." You shall see new charms in your Lord's character, new glory in his doctrines, new value in his promises, new influence in his precepts, and new brightness in his hopes. And what is Jesus seen through a glass darkly, to Jesus seen face to face? What is the communion table to the marriage supper of the Lamb? What is the ministry of angels to the Man of Sorrows, to the songs of loftiest adoration with which they surround his throne? Raise now the song, which, by expressing your confidence and subjection, honours his power and grace—"The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us;" and soon shall you lift up your voices in that anthem, which shall proclaim the glory of him who hath completed your happiness, and add to it a note higher and sweeter than is to be found in the brightest angel's praise—"Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us to our God kings and priests." Sublime as this song is, it rises not to his merits; and unceasing as it is, it

exhausts not either the worshippers or the theme. Soon shall you see Jesus coming in the glory of all the holy angels. A spectacle how grand ! It is the signal of ruin to the world, but of salvation to you. Amen, even so come, Lord Jesus.

ADDRESS XXXII.

JOHN v. 14.

“ Behold, thou art made whole ; go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.”

THUS did Jesus dismiss from his presence the man whom he had cured of a disease of thirty-eight years continuance. How fitly does the healing power put forth on this patient, represent the spiritual cures which are wrought by the great Physician of the soul ! May I thus address each of you, my friends, “ Behold thou art made whole !” Have you felt that you were guilty, depraved, and perishing ? Did the consciousness of your danger dictate the lamentation, “ Woe is me, for I am undone ?” You tried every method of relief which your own fancy and hope suggested. You applied to those who heal the wounds of conscience slightly, crying, Peace, peace, where there is none ; but all the means which you employed were found unavailing. Corruption raged in the soul, and terror and sorrow overwhelmed the heart. Remember the period, when, in an agony of mind, you exclaimed, “ A wounded spirit who can bear !” “ Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak ; O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed. Return, O Lord, deliver my soul ; O save me for thy mercies sake.”

O free me from the pride and carnality which taint my prosperity ; from the impatience which makes me miserable in sorrow ; from the blasphemous thoughts which render the exercises of religion a terror to me ; and from that horror of conscience which seems the commencement of hell within me.

In the day of your extremity, the Redeemer appeared, and bound up your wounds, pouring in wine and oil. He made your noisome sores give place to holy beauties, your gloomy terrors to lively hope, and your bitter groaning to grateful praise. He gave light to the bewildered mind, and rest to the distracted heart. He put his laws in your minds, formed in you new principles of action, taught you purity of thought and affection, and animated you to all holy obedience.

Whence, O Christians, came the balm which gave ease so immediate and so sweet to your wounds ? It came from Calvary, for that balm is the blood of the cross. He was wounded that we might be relieved, and bruised that we might be bound up. The chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed. The fountain of Christ's blood is the true pool of healing, and every disease must yield to its virtue ; nor is it at one, but at all seasons, that its streams are sanative.

How sweet is bodily health ! Ye can talk of its value, who are rising from the bed of languishing to mingle in the pursuits of life. Ye can tell its sweetness, who are saying, " In the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave. My breath is corrupt, my days are extinct, the graves are ready for me." What would I not give for the fulness of health to these wasted limbs, for the rest of health to these vexed bones, and for the freshness of health to this wan cheek !—But infinitely more precious is the health of the soul. It is the pledge of life eternal. It is a likeness to the Saviour's image. How admirable is its beauty ! How delightful is its enjoyment ! When it is perfect, and liable to no decline,

as it will be in heaven, your joy will be full : but, alas ! while here we live in an unfavourable climate, and, from our want of caution, our health is endangered. Ah ! that moral beauty should ever decay, that spiritual strength should ever become feeble, and that divine charity should in us ever wax cold !

You have come to the communion table to testify your gratitude to the great Physician, and I trust you will find this ordinance invigorating to every gracious principle within you. The language which Paul addressed to his companions in his voyage to Rome, may now be applied to you ; “ I pray you take some meat, for this is for your health, for there shall not an hair fall from the head of any one of you ; and when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks in presence of them all, and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then they were all of good cheer, and they all took some meat.” The apostle, amidst all his zeal for the salvation of souls, did not disregard what was conducive to the temporal welfare of those with whom he associated, even of the very soldiers whose prisoner he was.

And shall not you, ye pilgrims to Sion, eat your bread with joy, the bread which Christ hath blessed and broken ? Shall not you drink your wine with a merry heart, the wine which he has blessed and mingled ? It must be for health, for it is the bread of life, and the cup of salvation.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ Bless the Lord, O my soul, who healeth all thy diseases.” “ O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave ; thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.”

Ye trembling souls, who are saying, “ If I may but touch the hem of his garment I shall be healed ;” stretch

forth your hand, for there is healing in his robe. "And the whole multitude sought to touch him, for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all." "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

Ye backsliders, who have relapsed into your maladies, listen to his gracious call: "Return, O backsliding children, unto me, and I will heal your backslidings." It becomes you to approach him with the deepest blushes of shame, and with the most pungent feelings of remorse. O Jesus, wilt thou renew that which I have so wickedly defaced? and wilt thou restore that which I have so madly thrown away? I could hope for this from no generosity but thine.

Pray earnestly for the extension of his healing virtue to a diseased world. The leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. When the world was distracted by contentions, and defiled with blood, infidel philosophy boasted that it could render it virtuous and happy; but, like the poison tree, it diffused the most unwholesome odour around it, and dropt a consuming venom on all who reclined under its shadow. Men can be blessed in none but Jesus.

Let the caution of our Lord be ever before your eyes, "Go and sin no more." Your profession binds you to this; "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." I call you to this, by the regard which you feel for your own safety. Can you think of bringing back the films of prejudice to your eyes, the palsy of sloth to your limbs, the fever of lust to your hearts, and the lethargy of insensibility to your consciences? He hath a rod with which he punishes the follies and the crimes of his children. How terrible is this rod in the hands of insulted goodness! How painful are its strokes, to a heart quickened to spiritual feeling! Can you bear the thought of dishonouring your kind Friend and Benefactor, by your unworthy

conduct? Hath he shewn such tenderness and patience, such grace and skill in healing you, and can you be guilty of the abominable thing which his soul hates?

Think on the vows you have often made, and this day have repeated, that as you have done iniquity, you will do so no more. You wept in the presence of Christ over the little influence of your past vows upon you, and if these tears were not a mockery of the Saviour, you will feel a more determined abhorrence of every false and wicked way than ever.

Recollect the noble language of Nehemiah, "Should such a man as I flee?" Shall a creature so loaded with benefits, and so bound by cords of love to obedience, desert my God and my duty? "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Think what time you have devoted to sin already. How many of you have devoted to it the golden moments of youth, and the bright days of prosperity! These golden moments were dimmed, and these bright days darkened by folly; and would you wish it to add to the burden of your days of carefulness, and to curse the infirmities of your age? Let every day be distinguished by new efforts to attain that perfection in goodness to which the Gospel calls you. Then, instead of a worse thing coming unto you, God will do better to you than at your beginning. It shews much grace to bring you to his table; but more to lead you to the banquet he has prepared above. It shews much grace to save you from hell; but more to receive you to glory. It shews much grace to begin the good work of holiness within you; but more to crown it with perfection. He shews much grace in granting you partial victories; but more in bruising Satan under your feet. Partial views of God are delightful; but what are they to seeing him

as he is? The consolations of God's house of prayer are sweet; but what are they to the joy of our Lord? Look for such blessed hopes, and count not any sacrifice painful to realise them. I take my leave of you, by expressing for you the wish of John for his friend Gaius: "Beloved, I wish above all things, that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." "Save now, we beseech you, O Lord. O Lord, send now prosperity."

ADDRESS XXXIII.

JOHN vi. 56.

"He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

How low is the idea which some have formed of these expressions! They have imagined that all our Lord meant by our eating his flesh and drinking his blood, was the participation of the symbols of his sufferings and death. But Jesus would not have promised such blessedness to an act, which may be performed without one sentiment of admiration of his character, or one feeling of attachment to his cause. Christianity is not a religion of form and ceremony, it is the religion of the heart; and the observance of its rites, few and simple, must be accompanied with those various movements of devotion, which ally our worship to that of heaven.

Christians, there is an exercise of soul which must accompany the receiving of these elements, or it will be only an empty ceremony.

To eat Christ's flesh, and to drink his blood, is to be-

lieve that he gave himself a sacrifice for our sins. This is the grand view which the gospel gives us of the death of Christ. At this Socinians have cavilled, and infidels have blasphemed; yet the church shall proclaim it in her testimony, and heaven shall celebrate it in its songs. You must regard him as expiating your guilt; as the victim that is bleeding for you. How precious are those tears which flow for my sorrows! How precious is that blood which streams on the altar for my offences! The atonement of Christ is the only hope that saves me from despair.

To eat Christ's flesh, and to drink his blood, is to share in the blessings procured by his death, and to trace its connection with them all. He was seized, that we might be set free. His soul was troubled, that we might obtain true peace. And the sublimest enjoyments of heaven spring from the horrors of his agony. I see him accursed for our happiness, and yielding up his spirit, that our souls might live.

To eat Christ's flesh, and to drink his blood, is to feel the influence of his death in exciting us to holiness. The atonement of Christ teaches us, what claims the justice of God hath on our fear, and his grace on our love. Christ's sacrifice of himself teaches us to withhold nothing from him, to bear in silence the indignation of the Lord, and to consider sin as the worst and bitterest of all evils. And his death teaches us to die to sin, and to live to righteousness. It is from the cross of Jesus that you must derive animation to languid piety, and stability to wavering principle. If this warms not the heart, it must be twice dead. From his death, you must learn confidence in prayer, tenderness in penitence, fervour in praise, enlargement in charity, and melting affection in the holy communion. For such purposes he hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

And are these hard sayings? No. "His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed." His flesh is the food of heaven, and his blood is the wine of the

kingdom. It is not like the manna which descended only for the Jews, and which was liable to corruption ; it is living bread, and it is given for the life of the world. The manna could only support temporal life, and soon became an object of disgust to the Israelites ; but of this food, good men continue to partake with increasing relish. And “ whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“ And will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth ?” “ He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” But will Christ take up his abode in a place so unworthy of him, and where corruptions so offensive to him abound ? What is a prince’s reposing in a mean cottage to this ? Christ comes to his people’s hearts, and dwells there, like the sun surrounding himself with clouds, that he may deck them with the most beautiful colours. They are not the place of his transient visits, but of his permanent abode. Light, life, and peace, attest his presence. “ Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, I dwell in the humble and contrite spirit.” I scorn not that abode. The life of God is there. Will Christ take such creatures as we are to dwell with him ? He will, for “ He brought me into his banqueting-house ;” there I am at present, and his banner over me is love. “ God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” I deserved to dwell with devouring fire, and to abide in everlasting burnings ; but to me it is given for Christ’s sake, to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The good man’s heart is Jehovah’s temple ; and his altar is the saint’s home. No novelty of events or scenes can ex-

clude you from his thoughts ; and no obscurity can hide you from his eye. No art can induce him to leave you ; nor can even your ingratitude and folly efface you from his heart. You dwell on his heart amidst all the attractions of the heaven of heavens.

Shun, Christians, the mansion of folly, and the tents of sin ; for to this your privileges call you. The gaieties of fashionable dissipation but ill accord with Christian seriousness, or the pageantry of the world's vain show, with a heart devoted to the realities of eternity. Let your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be kept pure as becomes the temple of God. The hour is at hand when Jesus and you shall have one dwelling, one feast, one triumph, one inheritance, and one throne ; and shall not you have one life of holiness at present ? Let the life of Jesus be made manifest in your mortal bodies. Let not your hearts be in the house of feasting. " Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness." It will be far more honourable for you to be known as a visitant of the fatherless and widows in their affliction, than as the jovial companion in the festive circle. I recommend not that austerity, which shrinks from social intercourse, and whose food is the bread and water of affliction. Religion goes at fit seasons to the scene of innocent indulgence, and, by her courtesy and sweetness, adds a charm to the manners ; but she shuns the festivity where slander defames the characters of others, where intemperance never says it is enough, and where the wanton jest and song cherish the vicious propensities of the heart.

Fret not that your dwellings are mean and solitary. It is not the splendour of a dwelling which attracts the Saviour, nor its meanness that repels him. When discontent points out to you how many things are wanting in your abode necessary to your comfort, let this be your answer, " Christ dwells here." The candle of the Lord often shines in poverty's darkest hovel ; and

his presence cheers the dreary solitude of age, which has outlived every earthly friend.

In fine, remember that your regards to the death of Christ are not to be restricted to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper. You must always bear about with you in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. We spend not that hour like Christians, in which meditation takes not a flight to Calvary. Of Jesus, and his grace, and example, let your hearts and lives be full. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, who endured the cross, despising the shame."

ADDRESS XXXIV.

JOHN vii. 46.

"Never man spake like this man."

WHAT a striking character of our Lord as a teacher ! It proceeds from a quarter where we might have expected the misrepresentations of prejudice, or the scoff of contempt ; not the language of zealous admiration. It is probable that these officers had imbibed the enmity of the rulers against Jesus of Nazareth, and had regarded, with jealousy and rage, his growing influence, as menacing the ruin of their power. They had long since learned to suppress the relentings of pity for the wretched victims of tyranny or justice ; and the voice of misery, in its most melting tones, was lost on their hearts. To them, it is likely, religion was known only in its forms ; yet such was the power of

our Lord's discourse, that their hands and hearts were bound, and, in defiance of the displeasure of their proud and cruel masters, they return without him as their prisoner, and state his unrivalled excellence, in exhibiting the truths of God, as the reasons why they had not brought him.

To this encomium, Christians, your hearts assent. Never man spake with such wisdom as Jesus. On him the Spirit of understanding rested, and he taught the truths which man is called to believe, and the duties which are required of him, in a manner, and at seasons, the best adapted to the characters and circumstances of his hearers. He knew how to oppose every prejudice, and how to touch every chord of feeling. The deep things of God, and all the recesses of the human heart, were open to him. While the disputers of this world were darkening counsel by words without knowledge, and bewildering themselves and their followers in the dark mazes of vain speculation, Christ made the simple wise to salvation; taught the guilty repentance unto life; called the anxious mind to confidence in providence; stimulated the charitable, by revealing the rewards of judgment; and made hypocrisy to tremble under all its disguises. His object was not to amuse, or to astonish; but to instruct, to reform, and to save.

Never man spake with such majesty as Jesus did. He did not indeed, like some who deem themselves masters in Israel, shew, by his discourses, his contempt of the understanding and the condition of his hearers. His compassion for the souls of men, and his wish to enlighten and convert them, made him stoop to modes of address which were familiar, but never low. The diamond lost not its brilliance though it was set in a humbler metal than gold. Still, in those discourses in which he shewed most meekness of wisdom, he spoke with such solemnity, energy, and independence, that the people were astonished at his doctrine. "He spake as one having authority, and not as the scribes." He never

stooped to court applause, to flatter the populace, or to fawn upon the great. The rage of the crowd, the cabals of the scribes, and the violence of Herod, he boldly defied. His doctrine was directed against sinful habits, however general; and against secret wickedness, though in high places. Much of the majesty of other speakers was derived from adventitious circumstances, from the splendour of their robes, or the magnificence of the places where they addressed their hearers. It was the blaze of royalty spread round the throne of judgment; and the echo of the thunder of eloquence from the roofs and pillars of palaces and temples, that often led the multitude to exclaim, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man;" but whether we view our Lord teaching from the mountain, or the fishing boat, or the table of hospitality, we see such a glory as constrains us to cry out, "Who teacheth like God?"

Christians, are ye his disciples indeed; his disciples, not in name, but in spirit and in obedience? Have you received the truth in the light and love of it? Is it your most delightful posture to sit at Christ's feet, and to hear his word? Do you keep his sayings, and ponder them in your hearts? Do you count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus your Lord? Then to you Wisdom says, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of your profession, Christ Jesus."

Never man spake with such eloquence as this man. Eloquence has wrought greater wonders than the sword. Like the lightning of heaven, it hath, at one flash, struck the hearts of thousands, and made them throb

with admiration, with pity, or with rage. Ferocious crowds have sunk under its thunder, and dispirited armies have rushed on to the cannon's mouth. But what eloquence was ever heard like his, "into whose lips grace was poured?" At his voice, contempt was turned into wonder, and aversion into love. His eloquence palsied the arm of violence, and struck the audacious blasphemer dumb. At his call, the obdurate sinner relinquished his vices, and pining sorrow raised its eyes in hope. "All bare him witness, and marvelled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth."

Never man spake with such plainness as this man. He preached the gospel to the poor, and to those whom spiritual pride scorned. He used not the swelling words of vanity, by which the half-learned try to conceal their ignorance, and the pedant seeks to excite admiration. "He sought out, and set in order, acceptable words," and, by the most instructive and beautiful parables, made the weakest understand his lessons. Though he knew the unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter, he spoke in the language of mortals, and in its most perspicuous terms. There were times, indeed, in which he judged it necessary to puzzle and confound the disputer and the scribe; but it was his most frequent exercise to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to babes.

Never man spake with such tenderness as this man. The compassion and kindness of his heart gave to his manner a melting sweetness. "His doctrine dropped as the small rain on the tender herb, and distilled as the dew upon the grass." When he warned the wicked, it was with the earnestness of pity; and when he comforted the feeble-minded, it was with the softest tones of a parent's love. Who, that is not lost to feeling, can read such passages as the parable of the prodigal son, and Christ's farewell address to his disciples, without being melted? His words came from a heart where

compassion flowed. When he reproved, men saw on his countenance, not the scowl of malice, but the sadness of pity ; and when he comforted, it was not in the careless language that indicated a heart at ease, but in the kindest accents of sympathy.

We trust, Christians, that he hath spoken to your hearts with a wisdom which hath expanded your views ; with a majesty which has thrown down every proud imagination ; with an eloquence which has brought every thought into subjection to him ; with a plainness as if it was the instruction of a father ; and with a tenderness peculiar to him who hath the tongue of the learned, to speak a word in season to the weary. " Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way." The most solemn and melting of his lessons are taught on Calvary ; and while the horrors of his death rise to the view, the voice issues from his lips which speaks peace to his saints.

Christians, adhere stedfastly to the Apostle of your profession. Listen not to the novel speculations of those who bring you another gospel ; and approach not the place where infidelity spreads her smoke, and casts around her firebrands, arrows, and death. Ye know your Master's words ; and it is by continuing in their faith and influence, that you shall experience the happiness which they promise. " I am the light of the world ; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The most acceptable homage you can pay to your Teacher, and the truest respect you can shew him, is obedience to his instructions. He will reject, with abhorrence, the claim which the immoral professor will advance to his regard ; " Lord, Lord, have we not eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets ?" " The servant that knows his Lord's will, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." God will judge men, not by the stores of their memory, the fluency of their talk, or the blaze of their profession, but by their

temper and conduct. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

ADDRESS XXXV.

JOHN ix. 35.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

THIS question our Lord put to the man whose eyes he had opened, that he might lead him to proper conceptions of his Benefactor's character, and that he might shew his power to raise the soul from darkness to marvellous light. This question, Christians, he addresses to you, "Do ye now believe?"

This is a very solemn question. Consider who it is that proposes it. It is he "who searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." It is he whose eye is upon you, to mark what attention you pay to it, and who hath power to punish, in a manner the most dreadful, those who disregard it, and trifle with it. The Son of God, by whom this question is put, is the Judge to whom you must soon give an account of yourselves; and there is something very awful in his thus taking cognizance of your sentiments and feelings respecting him, and anticipating the scrutiny of that tremendous day. The answer to this question must rank us among the heirs of heaven, or among the children of wrath. This is a question which will remain an interesting object of inquiry in every age. There are questions which one age deems grave and serious, and which in another are made the objects of derision; but this is one which cannot be stripped of its

solemnity, and which no ridicule and no sophistry can render contemptible.

This is a question in which every one of you must view himself as interested, and which every one must answer for himself. "Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith."

Have you a proper knowledge of Christ's real character? Have you contemplated, with attention and delight, the various representations which are given of him in Scripture? Do you regard him as the image of the invisible God, the grand subject of ancient prophecy, the only atonement of human guilt, and the perfect pattern of moral excellence, the way, the truth, and the life? On every earthly object I can close my eye, if to me it is given "to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." To every earthly object I can close my heart, if to me it is given "to know the riches of the glory of this mystery, Christ in me the hope of glory."

Let me ask you on what grounds you yield your assent to the truth of these representations of the character of Christ? Is it because you have been trained up in this persuasion from your infancy? and on account of the venerable names which maintain that he is the Son of the living God? Or is it because, in the testimony of the Gospel respecting him, you have marked such bright evidence, and such captivating energy, that you could no longer refuse to receive it? The assent of genuine faith is so far from being liable to the charge of credulity, that it displays a candour which repels the suggestions of prejudice, a strength of understanding which appreciates the force of evidence, and an integrity of heart that yields to it.

Do you rely on the power and the grace of Jesus for life and salvation? Do you consider him not merely as the propitiation for sin, as the friend of the miserable, and as the only sure foundation of human happiness; but do you rely on him for the pardon of your trans-

gressions, and look to him for consolation and rest to your souls? The Saviour is most worthy of our firmest reliance. In trusting in Christ, we lean not on a broken reed, but on the rock of ages, and on the pillar and ground of truth. Is your reliance on Christ partial? Is it accompanied with confidence in excellencies in yourselves? or is Jesus all your hope? "We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh."

Has your faith on the Son of God that influence which true faith ever hath? True faith purifies the heart. No man can believe that Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity, and that "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and indulge vicious propensities in his soul, or live in the practice of sin.

True faith overcomes the world. The eye that looks to celestial splendour will not be dazzled with the vain pomp of this world: nor will the afflictions of a moment render that heart, whose treasure is in heaven, a fountain of tears.

Faith works by love. The perception of Christ's excellence directs the affections to him, and the consciousness of the relation of our fellow-creatures to their Lord and ours, will warm the heart with the most fervent charity. It is not in the infidel's heart that you will find the sacred glow of benevolent feeling. His words may be smooth; in animated language he may exhibit the excellence of love to man, and the pleasure which its exercise yields; but war is in his heart. He tries to harden man's heart against the counsels of his best friend, and to dissuade perishing mortals from fleeing to their only hope. It is in the man who believes on the Son of God, that you will find brotherly kindness existing in its strongest degree, and manifested in its noblest and most valuable forms.

Has your faith this practical tendency? Are the iniquities which you once regarded, the objects of your

abhorrence? Can you leave the world to the fools who doat on it, and rejoice in God's name all the day? What know ye of the charity that suffereth long and is kind? For true believers, the table of the Son of God is spread; and we trust that, when he comes, he will find faith there.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Let faith contemplate the suffering Redeemer in the severity of his anguish, in the perfection of his sacrifice, and in the love of his heart: and may these words of the apostle Peter be fulfilled in your present exercise, "In him believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." And may "your life in the flesh be by the faith of the Son of God, who loved you, and gave himself for you."

Give glory to the Author of your faith, that to you this precious grace has been given. This is a most valuable gift; for it hath love for its source, and salvation for its end. Faith is a principle which effectually guards the purity of the heart, and brings to it, even in the depth of sorrow, consolation from heaven. It produces triumphs more splendid than any which history celebrates; and, uniting the soul to the Redeemer, applies to it his inestimable blessings.

Endeavour to grow in faith. We wish to have reason to say, with regard to you, "We are bound to give thanks for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you aboundeth." There is a period at which, when other trees arrive, their growth terminates, and they begin to wither and to decay; but there is no such period in the growth of faith. In the valley of the shadow of death, cold and dark as it is, faith hath been seen more strong and lively than in any other place. "These all died in faith."

Remember, that "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." What is it that proves the life and power of the spring? It is when its waters flow with unabated fulness and strength. Incorruptible integrity, active beneficence, and endearing gentleness, are the best evidences of faith, and the arguments which most effectually recommend it to others. Oh that the zeal which hath been thrown away in idle disputation about the nature of faith, had been employed in urging and exhibiting its practical influence! And may it appear in the discourse of Christians, surrounded not with the subtilties of metaphysics, or the dreams of enthusiasm, but with the beauties of holiness.

Your faith will be tried; and take heed that it possess such a degree of strength as will endure the trial. When temptation assails it, let it be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. When sophistry labours to beguile you, let it be sufficiently quick and powerful to detect and to expose it. And in dark scenes, where God speaks only in wrath, let it say, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

O ye, who are complaining that your faith is like a tree which the lightning hath smitten, that its trunk is shattered, and that its branches are naked and broken; go to the compassionate Redeemer, and say to him with tears, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." Instead of indulging in unavailing lamentation, use diligently every mean which he hath appointed, for strengthening the things that remain, and are ready to die. In saying to you, "O ye of little faith, wherefore did ye doubt?" he acknowledges the reality of your faith, while he complains of your suspicions of his mercy, and stirs you up to form views of his character more worthy of him, and more consoling to yourselves.

While this question of our Lord has been put to his disciples at his table, it is one which claims the attention of every human being, and which I wish you to

propose to the serious consideration of all with whom you are connected. Address it to the young. Youth is said to be the season of credulity ; for it has not the caution, by which experience guards from the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. Happy is it when it is distinguished by that faith which makes Christ, the wisdom of God, its early, its only choice ; and when it prefers to all the gayest pleasures of the world, joy and peace in believing. Have you friends engaged in the pursuit of human learning ? Call their attention to Him who is full of grace and truth. While you trace their progress in human science, be solicitous that they may possess the knowledge which is life eternal. Address it thus to those who are busy in amassing the world,—“ You count your thousands of gold and silver ; but do you never ask, Are we rich in faith ? You are diligent to know the state of your flocks, and to look well to your herds ; are you as diligent to make your calling and election sure ? You complain that you have not the same worldly advantages as others ; but do you never think, Have I obtained like precious faith with saints through the righteousness of God, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ ?” Have you aged friends ? Ask them, Are you supporting your feeble and trembling hearts, on the promises of the Redeemer ? And are you waiting for the consolation of Israel ? And let it be said to the dying, Have you no reason to dread that awful sentence, “ If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins ?” Can you submit, without dismay, to the power of death, relying on the grace of the Redeemer, and on his promise of life eternal ? Can you join with the Apostle in saying, “ I know whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day ?” By such questions, proposed in a manner modest, serious, and affectionate, you will induce them to lay open their hearts to you ; and you will have it in your power

to address to them counsels, warnings, and consolations, for which they may for ever bless you.

In a short time, the ministers of religion must give in their account respecting you ; and while they state the doctrines which they taught, may they declare the affectionate reception which you gave to them in the Apostle's language, " So we preached, and so ye believed." And may the great Redeemer bear you this testimony, " I gave unto them the words which thou gavest me, and they did receive them ; and they knew that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."

ADDRESS XXXVI.

JOHN x. 17.

" Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again."

THESE words strongly express the voluntary nature of our Lord's sufferings and death. He was led like a lamb, silent and unresisting, to the altar. He laid down for us, not what was of trivial worth ; but his life, a life of which he fully knew and felt the value. He laid it down, not with the reluctance with which a man parts with an object which he would gladly retain, but with all the promptitude of generous feeling. It was the last and the greatest sacrifice of his love.

When men are dying after a struggle with pain or disease, the sinking of the voice commonly precedes the termination of life ; and the articulation is faint and indistinct : but, to shew that our Lord's strength was not

exhausted, and that he died not because he could bear no more, he cried with a loud voice, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" and when he had said this, he dismissed his soul.

With what pleasure did David contemplate the cheerfulness with which the people presented their offerings for the house of the God of Israel: "As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart, I have willingly offered all these things; and now I have seen with joy, thy people which are present here, offer willingly to thee." And hath not Jesus far higher grounds of exultation, in that generous alacrity with which he had laid down his life, that mercy might be built up for ever? In their offerings of precious stones, and of talents of gold and silver, I see the triumph of piety over the spirit of vanity and avarice; but in Christ's sacrifice of himself, I see the triumph of zeal, and of love, over the ingratitude and impiety of a rebellious world. "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ."

Now the Son of man is a breathless corse. And will he remain so? Man cannot recal the breath to his nostrils, nor renew the current of blood in his veins. He, at whose command thousands lay down their lives, cannot deliver one soul, not even his own, from the power of the grave. The mandates of authority, the skill of science, and the cries of affection, would there be employed in vain. There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain, and, I may add, to recal it; but Jesus had: "I have power to lay down my life, and power to take it up again." Christ rose from the grave in greater majesty than he went to it, but not with less love. When the soul returned from paradise to the body it had quitted, it came not less disposed to befriend us. The infirmities of human nature attended him no farther than the tomb, there they left him for ever; but its kind affections are the glory of his character, and in their fullest glow he issued from the cold grave.

He went to heaven in a more triumphant manner than he descended to earth, but equally attached to our interests, and equally zealous in our cause. He ascends the throne to give repentance and remission, and lifts the censer, that he may offer up our prayers. That zeal for his Father's glory, which led to the sacrifice of Calvary, prompts him to employ the energies of his power in subduing the nations to God. From the rivers of life rise those dews, which he sends down to our parched earth, to call forth "those fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God." He entered into his glory, and it is a glory which he permits his people to call theirs. Now, Christians, look to your dying and living Lord. Claim him in the fruits of his death, and in the power of his resurrection, and say, "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." What does Jesus call you to lay down for him? Peter once said to him, "I will lay down my life for thy sake." But this proof of your affection he doth not require. He calls you to lay down those follies and errors, which are no less dishonourable to him, than injurious to yourselves. Sacrifice them without one effort to save, and without one cry to spare them, without one sigh of reluctance, or one moment of hesitation. Lay them down, to take them up again no more.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

The idea of his Father's love, Jesus cherished through the whole of his sufferings. When he thought of the shame of the cross, his heart exulted that his Father would love him for that degradation. When he thought of its agonies, he felt assured that his Father would love him for these pangs. Let us think of the spirit which shone in these sufferings, and we will see how dear they

must have been to his Father. How dear to the righteous Lord that loveth righteousness, must not that regard to the honour of justice have been, which made Jesus welcome the extremity of pain and sorrow, rather than that it should receive the least taint, or have the smallest of its claims unfulfilled ! How dear to him that delighteth in mercy, must not that love have been which was stronger than death ! Never did the glory of God shine on earth as in the face of the dying Jesus.

But the Father loves him for what he does for our salvation in heaven. He loves him for every prayer he presents, for every blessing he bestows, for the preparation he makes for our happiness, and for every soul that he welcomes to glory. He loves him for the grace of his throne, as well as for the virtues of his cross. He sees his ardent benevolence and zeal, glowing with a power which no elevation, and no enjoyment, can damp, and which no length of time, and no magnitude of effort, can exhaust. My Son's throne is like my own, a throne of grace, and his sceptre is like mine, a sceptre of righteousness.

And shall not we love him, as dying for us, and as rising again ? We see the glories of love in the Saviour's shame ; the power of love in his exhausted strength ; and the depth of love in the grave of Jesus ; and seest thou no evidence of love where the Saviour now is ? His crown sparkles, his chariot is paved, and his heart melts with love. I will love thee, O Lord. Calvary, and heaven, present me with incitements to love thee, which my heart shall ever feel. How delightful is the thought, that your affections terminate on the object of the Father's delight ! He who is supreme in your hearts, is supreme in that of his Father. The man who loves the world, loves that which God sets at nought ; and he who loves sin, loves that which God abhors ; but you love one who is the elect of infinite wisdom, and the delight of infinite goodness.

Let us learn from this scene, Christians, what qualities in characters to esteem most affectionately. Let us abhor that lukewarmness which never heaved a sigh over the dishonours done to God, and cares not how its brethren live or die. Let us abhor that selfishness and eagerness to be rich, which devote every moment to Mammon, and laugh at charitable efforts, as the profusion of enthusiasm. Let us honour the zeal which strives to do all for the glory of God, and benevolence, in its labours of love.

Rejoice that your zeal for God's honour, and your benevolence to men, are qualities in which he delights. He loves the faintest traces of his Son's image, and the feeblest movements of his Spirit, even the smell of his Son's garment. Let your zeal and love abound more and more, for in both you have much to learn, and much to acquire.

God delights in the good man's willingness to die at his command ; in the piety, which nothing can satisfy but his likeness ; in the patience that waits for his call ; and in the benevolence, which feels this as the strongest tie to earth, that it is a sphere for shewing good-will to men. Why should you be so reluctant to lay down " this vain life ?" Like your Lord, you shall arise in glory. Your eyes shall open to admire, and your lips to praise him. Your zeal shall be gratified with the adorations, and your benevolence with the happiness, of the just. And now, I trust, the resolution is formed by you, " Earth and heaven shall be my place of service to my Redeemer ; and time and eternity shall be devoted by me to him." " While we live, let us live to the Lord," who gives life and blesses it ; when we die, let us die to the Lord, the conqueror of death ; when we rise, let us rise to the Lord our resurrection ; and, when we are glorified, let it be that we may " glorify him with our bodies, and with our spirits, which are his."

ADDRESS XXXVII.

JOHN xii. 3.

“ Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair ; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”

THIS act of Mary's was a beautiful expression of the most estimable qualities. It was on this account that our Saviour permitted it, and valued it so highly.

It was a proof of her gratitude. There are few who are not impressed by a distinguished act of kindness when it is performed. We think, in the first movements of our feelings, that it is impossible we can ever forget it ; but, ah ! how soon do these emotions subside ! Other impressions occupy the mind, and the resolutions which we had formed, as to the mode of testifying our gratitude, pass away never to be thought of more. Such was not the conduct of Mary. Some time had now elapsed since the resurrection of Lazarus, but the mercy is as precious in her view, as it was in the hour of re-union with her brother ; and to shew that the Saviour's kindness had not been forgotten, and never should, she pours on his head this costly ointment. I cannot do too much to refresh him, who gave to me such effectual consolation ; and my best ointment shall drop for him, whose tears flowed for me.

Christians, have not you as strong reasons for expressing your gratitude ? Have no friends been restored to you from the grasp of death ? Think what you felt at the moment when the first symptoms of recovery were visible, and remember your emotions, as you knelt by the bedside where the friend of your soul was lying

easy and tranquil, after his violent struggles. Have you no friends, whose souls Jesus hath delivered from spiritual death? Has not he brought up your own souls from corruption? Express to him, therefore, the gratitude which becomes you, and let him read in your hearts what he hears from your lips.

It was a proof of Mary's love. This ointment was costly, but she grudged it not; nor was it a small quantity that she gave, but such a measure of it as filled the whole house with its odour. In the warm climates of the east, the anointing of the head was very agreeable and exhilarating; but not deeming it enough to pour it on our Lord's head, she spread it over his feet. Her affection suggested to her how she might minister to our Lord's comfort. Instead of saying, My sister neither wishes nor needs any aid in ministering to his comfort; what therefore can I do? Her liberal heart prompted her to devote this ointment, which was her own exclusive property, to the refreshment of Him, who had anointed her with the oil of gladness. The man who loves Christ will not fold his hands in indolence, and say every sphere of activity is occupied, but will be eager to find out a place where he may spend and be spent for his Lord. It shewed the affection of Mary, that she wiped Christ's feet with her hair. Towels would not have been wanting for this purpose, had she sought them, or chosen to use them. The hair, in the east, was a principal object of attention in female decoration, and she delighted to employ its tresses in this office of respect to the Saviour.

Ye cannot, indeed, thus shew your love to the body of Jesus. But if, from affection to him, you drop balm into the wounds of affliction; if you moisten the parched lips of sickness, and wipe the dews of death from the brow; if you apply what will restore warmth to the feet which disease or infirmity have chilled, and give a cup of cold water to a disciple in his Master's name, these acts of charity are done to Jesus. At the commu-

nion table, let love pour its blessings on that head, "which is as the most fine gold:" let it give vent to the admiration which his excellence and goodness demand; let it delight in him as its chief joy, and lay its best services at his feet; and let the devotion of the heart ascend to him like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense: and may the savour of his good ointment exhilarate your hearts.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces whereby they have made thee glad."

Mary's anointing our Lord was an indication of self-denial. This ointment had either been purchased by her, or presented to her, for her own use. Such a quantity of it would have contributed for some time to the refreshment and the decoration of her person. Without it she would appear unlike the companions with whom she associated. How easily could she have procured with it some showy pieces of apparel! But, regardless of all such considerations, she joyfully devotes it to the honour of her Lord. Can I use exhilarating ointment, while my Lord is weary and exhausted? Let my companions solicit admiration, by their broided hair; mine shall wipe the feet that bring good tidings, and which came so far to raise my brother from the dust. Christians, ye too must deny yourselves. How idle are the pretexts, by which many try to excuse their want of liberality in the cause of piety and humanity. They say they have nothing to spare. Their tables are loaded with luxuries, and the retrenchment even of one dish, might furnish them with a fund for charity, and leave them enough, and more than enough, to supply the wants of nature. A little of that wine which flows so amply at the feasts of many, might support the hearts

that are sinking in weakness ; and one of their changes of raiment might cover the shivering pauper, whose rags yield him a sorry defence from the winter's cold. Too many, in the lower ranks of life, lay out in the purchase of apparel, far above their station, the money which might adorn them with the lustre of beneficence. Recollect, O Christian ! how much thy Lord sacrificed for thee, and thou wilt surely feel disposed to every act of self-denial for which he calls. How will the dying man look back on the indulgence with which he gratified himself, while he did nothing for the Redeemer. Disease will make that head ache, which was so often anointed with the chief ointments ; and despair shall harrow up that soul, which the voluptuary never withheld from any joy.

It was, in fine, an indication of Mary's zeal. Her temper was timid and modest ; and nothing but zeal for our Lord's honour, could have led her, in the presence of such a number of persons, to shew him this mark of respect. She knew not how the disciples would relish it. Perhaps her sister might blame her for idle profusion. She knew the rage of the rulers against all the followers of Jesus ; yet she openly honours him, whom his enemies delighted to degrade. And have we no zeal for the Lord ? Has none been kindled at his altar ? Are not our hearts " burning within us ? " Let us exert ourselves for Christ's honour, even though it should expose us to the censure of our dearest friends. What is the voice of upbraiding from those we love, to the frown of our Redeemer ? Men may represent your zeal as the operation of ill-nature, spiritual pride, or ostentation ; they may extol the complaisance which allows every man to indulge his own humour, and the indifference which " seeks none of the things that are Jesus Christ's," as tempers mild and candid ; but they are indications of the lukewarmness which God abhors. " Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." Carry

with you the zeal of God's house to every scene, and to every employment.

After Jacob's vision of the ladder, he took the stone which he had set for his pillow, and put it up for a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. This was a rite used of old, for consecrating any thing for a religious purpose. Raise, at the communion table, your pillar of memorial, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped;" and pour on it the oil of your gratitude and praise, for the privilege you have now enjoyed, for God's accepting your sacrifice, and remembering your gifts. How pleasing will it be to hear from the lips of your God, many days hence, such language as this, "I am the God of Bethel, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst the vow unto me!" Jesus will keep in record the pledges of thine affection and homage, and reward thee with that unction from the Holy One, which shall teach thee all things, fill thee with joy unspeakable and full of glory, animate thy obedience with heavenly ardour, and prepare thee for the crown that fadeth not away.

ADDRESS XXXVIII.

JOHN xiii. 4, 5.

"He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded."

Who can look at the Lord Jesus while thus employed, without the strongest emotions of wonder and love?

How admirably are majesty and tenderness combined in his looks and manner ; a majesty that guarded his condescension from abuse ; a tenderness which overpowered the hearts of his disciples ! I have seen, O Jesus ! penitence washing thy feet with its tears, and grateful affection anointing them with ointment ; but here I behold thee not ministered unto, but ministering ; and in the act of a servant, as well as in his form.

The washing of the feet was a rite of hospitality common in the East ; and from the climate, as well as from the sandals worn there, was peculiarly necessary and agreeable. But our Lord had more in view than to promote the temporary comfort of his disciples ; and meant to exhibit to us, in this act, the spirit that was his glory.

Behold, in Christ's washing the feet of his disciples, the meekness and lowliness of his heart ! He will disdain no office that is necessary for the consolation and the happiness of his followers. He will visit the meanest dwelling, bless the scantiest fare, and present the smallest offering, and the most imperfect services, of the sincerely pious. He will not suffer the tender plant to droop and die for want of moisture. He will accept the melody of the bruised reed, and listen to the praises of babes and sucklings. He will support infirmity in its trembling steps, and wipe the tear from the failing eye. He will go with virtuous poverty to its long home, and maintain its humble memorial.

What displays of condescension and mercy dost thou require at his table ? State them, and he will rise to grant thee thine heart's wish, and to fulfil all thy counsels. Is thy heart quaking with terror ? He approaches thee to gird thee with strength. Instead of the fears of nature, or of guilt, he will fill thee with the peace of God. Art thou blushing at the consciousness of thy unworthiness ? He comes to thee with the blood of sprinkling in his hands, and with the voice of approbation on his lips. Is thy heart sore broken ?

Behold he comes with the balm of Gilead to drop on its wounds.

But Christ's washing the feet of his disciples was intended to lead our views to an act of grace and love more astonishing still—"his washing us from our sins in his own blood." The washing of the feet was an act commonly performed by the lowest of the servants; but the death of the cross was the punishment allotted to the vilest criminals. So dreadful was the defilement which we had contracted, that nothing could purify us but the blood of the cross. Look, Christians, to Calvary, and behold the fountain opened! The stream of water and blood rushes forth, and for you it flows. Hear, in your Saviour's words, the confirmation of this truth: "This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for remission of sins unto many; drink ye all of it;" and as you do so, may this be the delightful persuasion of your hearts: "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin." May this be the testimony borne to you by him that looks on the heart, "Ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." I have led you to the blood of sprinkling: and while solemn silence reigns in this place, you are left to listen to the better things which it speaks, and to an application of it by faith, for promoting the sanctification and the joy of your hearts.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

You have felt, I trust, the virtue of this precious blood; but I must remind you, that there must be a continued application of it, till neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, remain on you.

"Take heed, lest ye be again entangled in the pollutions of the world, and overcome." The indulgence which fascinates your senses, may prove a snare to your souls;

and the object which invites your grasp by its fair and smiling appearance, may leave behind it a foul stain. Think how you will stand before your Redeemer, with spots on those garments which he made white in his blood ; and with corruption raging in that heart which he died to win to goodness.

O ye, whose hearts are still sinking under the consciousness of guilt ! listen to the language of your God and Saviour, “ Come now, let us reason together ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as the snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as the wool.”

But Christ washed the feet of his disciples, to teach them condescension and kindness to each other. While some degrade this scene by an imitation of its letter, with all the parade of a childish superstition ; and while princely pomp, and ecclesiastic domination, have affected to copy it ; remember that this is its spirit, “ Mind not high things ; but condescend to them of low degree ;” and that this is the best mode of following it, “ Distributing to the necessity of saints.” Ye who have the spirit of wisdom, comfort ye the feeble-minded, and admonish the inexperienced. Ye who have of this world’s goods, the poor pining in their naked dwellings, demand your visits, and your alms. The friendless orphan claims your notice, and the sick your sympathizing care. The vicious haunted by remorse, and sinking in despair, call on you by their groans to lead them to Him, whose glory it is that he can save the chief of sinners. The flower withering on the waste, may be destined for paradise, and through eternity, will reward the pity that watered it, by decking your inheritance with its blossoms. How delightful are those feelings of heart which attend the performance of acts of condescension and kindness ! And how amiable is that superiority in station or talent, which humility and charity unite their influence in adorning ! It is like the sun descending in softened splendour, and calling forth

the dew to refresh the parched fields. What blessings are invoked on the great as they go forth to relieve the wretched ; and of all the exertions of superior intelligence, there are none to which the heart does such homage, as to its efforts to make the simple wise.

Rejoice, Christians, that the ministrations of Jesus to the happiness of his people shall not be confined to this world. "Blessed are those servants, whom their Lord, when he comes, shall find watching ; he shall gird himself, and make them sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." He will rise from the throne, to replace the crown which had been laid at his feet. To the humble soul which sits down in the lowest room, as if the lowest was too exalted for it, he will say, Friend, go up higher : and for the labours of beneficence he will reward you bountifully. In the faith of this, be zealous in good works ; abound in hope ; and be clothed with humility. "Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

ADDRESS XXXIX.

JOHN xiii. 31.

"Now is the Son of man glorified."

THESE words were spoken by Jesus, in reference to his last sufferings. His enemies thought that his crucifixion would fix a brand of infamy on his name and cause, which would remain on them for ever. They

gave him thorns for his crown, a reed for his sceptre, thieves for his associates, and a cross for his throne ; yet, with all these in his view, Jesus could say, " The hour is come in which the Son of man shall be glorified." He saw, that amidst these thorns, laurels would spring up ; that this reed, like the rod of Aaron, would bring forth buds and blossoms ; that, of these associates, one would be a trophy of his mercy ; and that his cross would be the glory of earth, and the song of heaven.

The Son of man was glorified in his sufferings, by the wonders wrought by his Father in testimony to his innocence and dignity. The rending vail declared, that he was now subverting the ceremonial dispensation ; the darkened sun, that he was now overcoming the world ; the quaking earth, that the systems of idolatry and superstition would fall in pieces before him ; and the opening graves, that he was now swallowing up death in victory. Christians, have ye the enlightened and liberal spirit of the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ ? Have you repelled the temptations by which the world tried to seduce you from your duty ? Have you, in our Lord's conquest of death, found a security from its terrors, and a confidence which has enabled the feebleness of nature to welcome its approach ? The Lord hath done great things in you.

The Son of man was glorified in his sufferings, by the displays of divine perfection which he gave in them. The touch which healed the ear of Malchus ; the voice which made the armed band fall speechless to the ground ; the look which melted Peter into the deepest contrition ; and the grasp that plucked the penitent thief as a brand from the burning, were displays of power and grace which proclaimed that the sufferer was more than human. Oh that he would bless me with such a touch of his hand as would heal the plagues of my heart ! May I hear from his lips the voice that will make me repent in dust and in ashes ! May he give me such a look as will reclaim me from all my backslidings ; and

such a grasp as will draw me from every thing which would detain me from himself !

The Son of man was glorified by his sufferings, by the wonders which he then accomplished. Let the law declare how he magnified it,—the powers of darkness, how he triumphed over them,—sin, how it was expiated,—heaven, how it was purchased,—and the gates of hell, how they were broken in pieces. Was the law honoured when it was proclaimed by the voice of God amidst the tempests of Sinai ? Much more was it glorified when all its demands were fulfilled amidst the darkness of Calvary. Behold, O Christians, the everlasting doors open for you ! Behold Satan like lightning from heaven, and rejoice that his fall was the rise of man.

The Son of man was glorified in his sufferings, by the graces and virtues which he then displayed in their fullest excellence. The generosity which prayed for his murderers ; the patience that suffered excruciating torture in silence ; the faith that cleaved to an angry God ; the pity that looked from a cross on his mother's sorrows ; and the love that died for enemies,—are some of the virtues of the dying Saviour : and in what life or death can they find a parallel ? Like the Saviour in whom they shine, they have no equal. Hath that generosity steeled you against the dictates of the resentful passions ? Has that patience subdued the pride and the discontent of your hearts ? Hath that faith taught you to bless your Father when he scourges you ? Has that pity led you to weep with the wretched, and, amidst all your own difficulties, carefully to shelter a parent's grey hairs from the rude blast ? Has that love inclined you to do good to those who have injured you ? Is it your wish that you may be made conformable to Christ's death ? Is the world crucified to you by the cross ? Then the spirit of the cross rests upon you.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Never be ashamed of the sufferings of your Lord. "To Jews, the cross was a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness." Many have considered it as a blemish on the system of Christianity, which it was the office of prudence to conceal, or the duty of truth to expose. But of all its parts, this is the one on which you gaze with the most glowing admiration. While infidel philosophy turns away from it with disgust, or, as if he had not been sufficiently dishonoured, directs its sarcasms at the Sufferer, angels look at the scene with holy wonder, and extol the crucified One in all their songs; and nature and reason, in their noblest movements, bore him this testimony by the lips of the centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God."

In the afflictions which you labour under, God will bring you to honour. How wonderful is the notice which God himself takes of suffering saints! You would deem your affliction honoured, were kings to inquire into your situation, to watch in your sick chamber, and to mingle their sorrow with yours. Yet this would be as nothing when compared with God's putting your tears into his bottle; with Christ's being touched with the feeling of your infirmities; and with the Holy Spirit's abiding with you for ever.

Let the exercise of the Christian graces glorify God, and reflect credit on yourselves in suffering. "Let patience have its perfect work in you, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing;" and let it appear in submission to God, and in gentleness to man. Let faith trust in God's goodness, when his words are bitter, and his strokes are heavy; and let love welcome the rod that is wielded by the hand of mercy. Let generosity not only suppress harsh reflections against those who have been the instruments of your calamity, but dictate fervent prayers for their forgiveness and sal-

vation. Let repentance acknowledge the justice of your Father's corrections, and let gratitude bless him, that his chastenings are so beneficial in their influence, and that the blow is directed, not at all your comforts, but only at a few. Glorify God in your sorrows. As the wind opening the rose-buds to beauty and fragrance, so is affliction to the good; not like the blast that strews them on the ground.

Christians, our Lord's glory in his sufferings was the pledge of a brighter glory afterwards, when he rose in power, ascended in triumph, and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." And "your light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work for you a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory." "The trial of your grace, like gold brightened in the furnace, shall be found to praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Dust is now sprinkled on your heads, but the Lord shall place on them the crown of righteousness; and the honours of your Father's house shall more than compensate all the humiliations of this strange land.— "When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

ADDRESS XL.

JOHN xvii. 4.

"I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

WAS this the language of vain boasting? Was it the language of one whose hope might be found to be

presumptuous, or of one to whom the issue of his sufferings could be in any way uncertain? No. Jesus knew the end from the beginning. He was conscious that his task, arduous as it was, was not beyond his strength, and he speaks of the fulfilment of the great objects of his mission as past, because in a few hours they would be completely gained.

Jesus glorified God upon the earth. Angels glorify God in heaven, and there they bow in reverential adoration, and sing in cheerful praise; but the Son of man glorified God on earth, where the human race had dishonoured him. Where man had trampled on God's law, there Jesus established and magnified it; and where we had defaced his image, there Christ shone as the brightness of his glory. In his doctrines he exhibited the divine character, perfections, and law, in the purest and most striking manner, in opposition to the false and degrading representations of carnality and superstition. In his miracles, the hand of God was seen in its power, and his heart in its pity. In his example, the moral excellencies of Jehovah were beheld shedding a lustre on poverty, confounding the presumption, and repelling the slanders, of his self-righteous opponents; and in his death, divine justice received that which it would have sought in vain in the abodes of darkness—a complete satisfaction to all its demands. Here love blazes forth with a splendour never shewn before. Imagination contemplating this scene, talks of the inscriptions which she sees on the cross; but this is one which the pious mind ever marks there, one written on the heart of the beloved disciple, one consisting but of three words, but the import of which eternity only can disclose—"God is love." The holiness of God was glorified in the purity of the victim, "a Lamb without spot and blemish, in the finishing of transgression, and the bringing in of everlasting righteousness." The faithfulness of God approaches the cross, and bears this testimony, that "not one prediction hath failed," while the

manifold wisdom of God is seen in the harmony of mercy and truth, in uniting a nature capable of sufferings with one which could render these fully meritorious, and in confounding the devices of the devil, and turning the craft of this world, and the subtilty of hell, into foolishness. The thunders of his power heard on Calvary, who can understand?

But what work was it that our Lord finished? It was the work of obedience to the precept, and of satisfaction to the penalty of the law. It became him to fulfil all righteousness; and no demand of the law can you conceive which was not answered in his life, and no curse is there denounced against the objects of his mercy, which was not quenched in his blood. The cloud charged with the lightnings and thunders of Sinai hung over Calvary, and on him the tempest burst. It continued to rage till it was announced from the excellent glory that his work was accepted. This expression of his Father's approbation was the signal of his release. That shout which proceeded from the cross, "It is finished," was echoed back from the throne of the Eternal. It hath sounded in the testimony of the gospel, and in the songs of Sion from age to age. Behold the seal of these words before you! These symbols of bread and wine are tokens of the completion of redemption. Christians, I call on you to mark salvation accomplished in the breaking of his body, and those that are sanctified, perfected for ever in the shedding of his blood. Ye do not commemorate the Saviour's promise to redeem you, or his commencement of that work merely, but its glorious and happy termination.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Reflect, Christians, how cheerfully your Lord finished this great work. Not one moment was it intermitted. "It was his meat to do the will of Him that sent him,

and to finish his work." "He rejoiced like a strong man to run his race." He finished it alone. "I have trode the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me." He was so far from soliciting any to be fellow-workers with him, that he checked even the friendly sympathy which was mingling its sorrows with his, saying, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves."

He finished it in such a manner, that not a single flaw has been discovered in it; and so triumphantly, that the agonising body uttered the shout of victory, to the astonishment of the spectators, and to the shame and terror of his invisible opponents.

He finished it in the precise manner, and at the very moment, which infinite wisdom had appointed. And with what joy did not our Redeemer contemplate its close? A joy pure and ardent; for it arose from a love to God and to man, which no heart ever felt, or could feel, like his.

Do you ask for evidence that Christ hath finished his work? Behold it in yonder empty grave, in yonder ascending chariot, and in yonder opening heavens! See it in the Son of man standing on the right hand of God, and in the blessings he dispenses there; and hear it in the praises of the world of glory. Ye have felt it, and may you feel it more and more in redemption applied to your souls.

Now, Christians, I trust the song of angels hath been yours: that song which came down from the air to this earth, has now, I trust, gone up from this scene, that table, and your hearts, to heaven. "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men." This song shall be heard from the uttermost ends of the world, and from the new heavens and the new earth, when this universe in which we dwell shall be burnt up.

Be zealous for the glory of God. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Glorify him by the love of the heart, the praise

of the tongue, and the obedience of the life ; by gratitude, sobriety, and contentment at your meals ; by patience and submission under your sorrows ; by devotion in the temple, and purity in the world. Consider that in this life only can you glorify him upon earth. Now you are called on to honour God where your Saviour glorified him. It is here only that zeal can rise up against evil-doers ; that pity can instruct those who are perishing for lack of knowledge ; that sympathy can weep with the afflicted, or charity deal its bread to the hungry. It is here only that public spirit can exert itself for the good of society ; that piety can labour for the advancement of Christ's kingdom ; and that generosity can overcome evil with good.

Let me ask you how far you have advanced in the task which the apostle thus describes, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure." You are saying, "Alas ! my work is little more than begun." Let the contemplation of Christ's diligence stimulate your ardour ; and, "forgetting the things that are behind, press forward to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Endeavour to improve every day in the command of your tempers, in the sanctification of your thoughts, in the piety of your conversation, in spirituality of mind in the business of life, and in the graces which bless a household. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest." And when death comes, you will lay your heads on your pillow, as Paul laid his on the block, and utter his dying song. Mark how he copies the language of his Lord. Saints love to use Christ's words, as far as they are adapted to their circumstances. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,

which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing."

ADDRESS XLI.

JOHN XIX. 26, 27.

"When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy Son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

IN this passage, the suffering Redeemer is presented to you in a light highly interesting to your hearts. Let every soul be excited to admire a character so amiable, a friendship so strong, and a filial affection so tender. The selfish and frozen heart, which sees nothing to attract or to improve it in such a scene, is as unfit for the exercise of a communion table, as for the charities of social life.

How strong was the attachment of Mary and of John to our Lord! The regard which John had for the Saviour, has been often illustrated by his conduct and his writings. He leaned on his bosom; he followed him with unabated zeal wherever he went; and, during his last sufferings, he is the only disciple who clings to him. In this crowd of foes, my Saviour shall have at least one friend. He will see that there is one disciple whom no dread of violence can keep away from his cross. He made me a witness of his triumphs on Tabor, "when his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white

as the light ;” and shall not I follow him to Calvary, and shew him how my heart bleeds at his sufferings? Perhaps he may honour me with some intimation of his will ; perhaps he may give a look or a word, which will tell me that, when dying, he thought on me in love.

The care which Mary took of Jesus in his infancy, the pleasure which swelled her heart when his doctrine and miracles crowned him with glory, and the keenness with which she felt every indignity that was cast upon him, shew how tenderly she loved him. It was affection that led her to Calvary. She says not, why should I go? the sight of my distress will increase his anguish. I shall not have it in my power to administer to him the least relief, or to whisper to him the smallest consolation ; and what can I expect from those who are thus hostile to innocence like his? Can a helpless female brave the fury of an exasperated multitude? But her fears were suppressed by faith and love. So determined was her resolution, that no persuasion could have detained her. “ I will go to Calvary, though I should die on the spot.” The providence of God kept her in safety ; and, in the scene of agony, sent her balm to her wounds. Christians, ye are blushing that your attachment to Jesus is so cold and feeble in comparison with theirs. Open your hearts to the influence of the Holy Ghost, and he will shed abroad the love of Christ in them.

Our Lord looks with tender interest on these two witnesses of his sufferings. Dreadful as were the pains which our Lord now felt in his body, and sorrowful as was his heart even unto death, yet his eyes were fondly turned on the mother that bore him, and on the friend whom he loved as his own soul. Though he had not uttered a syllable, that look would have convinced them that his heart was still theirs. If a look from Jesus renewed a backsliding Peter to repentance, this look must at once have soothed and fortified the heart of his mother and his friend. It was like a gleam of sunshine,

calming the fury, and lessening the horrors of the tempest. It has been sometimes held forth as a proof of the magnanimity of the dying, by those who wished to do honour to their memory, that in the acute sufferings of their last hour, they seemed to feel no anxiety save for the comfort and the happiness of their connections. And shall our Saviour's solicitude for the welfare of his friends, thus affectingly expressed in the hour and power of darkness, excite no admiration, and receive no eulogy?

Oh that Jesus would look on me in pity! To thy kind attention I have not the smallest claim; but in turning to me thy compassionate eye, thou wilt shew the exceeding riches of thy grace, and raise a heart, almost despairing, to peace and to hope.

But was this all the interest which our Lord expressed in his mother's forlorn situation? He said to John, "Behold thy mother!" Let thy feeling heart try to conceive how much is comprised in these three words. Receive her into thy dwelling, and let her be a sharer of its comforts. Pity her infirmities, and assuage her griefs, by pointing out to her those blessed hopes which my doctrine inspires, and which my resurrection shall confirm. Let her find in thee all the gratitude, the kindness, and the veneration, which a virtuous child thinks that he owes to his earliest and tenderest friend. Our Saviour knew, that, so far from viewing it as a burden, the charge would gratify John exceedingly; and that to be guardian to the mother of his Lord, would appear to him a greater honour than to be possessor of a throne. Men are often mistaken in their ideas of those to whose care they commit their relations, for the appearance of gentleness, benevolence, and integrity, is often assumed for the basest purposes. But Jesus knew what was in man; and if John had not been worthy of the charge, it would not have been assigned to him. While John had a charge in common with the other disciples, to preach the gospel among the nations, the mother of Jesus was made his peculiar care.

To confirm Mary's confidence in the care of John, Jesus says to her, "Woman, behold thy son!" For thee he will cultivate the affection of a child. The disciple who stands by thy side, will cherish thee for my sake. He hath a heart like my own, in gentleness and goodness; and in him thou shalt find unabated kindness, and dutiful respect. Think not that the care of my friend over thee shall ever cease; for these few words which I have now spoken to him, will secure thee a home in his dwelling, and a protection which shall shield thee to thy grave.

From that hour, that disciple took her to his own home. What a beautiful example of prompt compliance with the Saviour's will was this! and never was the acceptance of this charge repented of. Christ's mother, in his house, was the honour and the joy of his dwelling.

Christians, we trust that you are now prepared to honour your Redeemer's name. Thou brightest pattern of the kind affections, in whose spirit and salvation all the families of the earth shall be blessed; whom the mother blesses for the kindness that shelters her grey hairs, and the child exalts for the pleasure which he finds in his filial duty; we pay thee the homage of our hearts, and whatever thou committest to our charge, we will keep faithfully to the death. Never shall thy altars fall in our dwellings, nor thy throne in our hearts.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Your hearts have been melting at the view of the kind affections of your Saviour, and are, I trust, eager to listen to the influence which they ought to have on your moral improvement. This scene strongly recommends to you, whose parents are living, the most affectionate care of them. We live in perilous times, "in which men are lovers of their own selves, disobedient to parents, without natural affection." Some, on the most

frivolous pretexts, put away from their dwellings, parents sinking under the weight of years, and abandon them, without a blush, to the charity of the public. There are others, who, though they invite parents in their decline to live with them, yet, if there be one place more comfortless than another in their dwellings, it is assigned to them ; and, when the gay or the rich honour them with their visits, they keep these aged relations out of view, as if their presence would mar the splendour and the mirth of their feasts. Alas ! how many ruin their parents by their extravagance ! How infamous is he, who, to pamper his appetites, or to gratify the instruments of his vices, squanders what parents had earned by the sweat of their brow, and dooms them to an old age of poverty and dependence ! Your hearts are now swelling with virtuous indignation at the unnatural beings who are guilty of such wickedness. This is a pledge, that in the sweetest of your comforts your parents shall share ; that, whatever connections you may form, your hearts shall not be withdrawn from them ; that, whatever prosperity you may attain, you will hail it as putting it in your power to brighten the evening of their days ; and that, whatever may be their sorrows, they shall not weep alone.

Some, under pretence of extreme sensibility, abandon the place where relations are dying, and commit them to the care of strangers. But will the hand of a mercenary keeper wipe the eye of affection so softly as that of a son or a daughter ? Or will a sick parent recline with as much pleasure on the arm of another, as on that of a child ? Canst thou forget the sacrifices which thy mother made for thy happiness ; the sleepless hours in which she watched by thy cradle ; how thy first cry roused her from slumber ; and, when disease made thee loathsome to others, how she cherished thee in her bosom ? “ If ye love me, keep my commandments ;” and ye know the fifth.

You have in this scene a strong sanction to virtuous

friendship. Let the vain declaimers against Christianity, as hostile to friendship, look at this scene, and blush for their ignorance and temerity. How many are the blessings which flow from virtuous friendship! How easy is the aching head, when she places it on her bosom! We tread with confidence in a path the most rough and unfrequented, when she guides us by the integrity of her heart, and by the skilfulness of her hand. How peaceful is the dwelling of affliction, when she is there to bind up the broken heart, and to comfort the feeble mind! And how cheerful is even the closing hour, when she is near the bed of the dying, receiving the parting charge, commending the soul to God, and animating the last adieu!

Ye young disciples, study well the characters of those who solicit your friendship. Remember the distinguishing features in the character of John. He was, in a high degree, mild, pious, and benevolent. Make no friendship with an angry man, for it will not be lasting; nor with a mercenary man, for this will be dangerous to your temporal interests; nor with one who has no reverence for the name or the word of God, lest you get a snare to your souls. Hypocrisy hath many artful disguises. Pray to God to shew you where you may safely place your hearts.

You wished, while you heard of the charge that was committed to John, that you had been honoured with such a proof of the Saviour's confidence and affection. But listen to what he saith to you: "Behold my mother and my brethren! Whosoever doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." There are some at the same table with you, whose poverty, or whose sorrows, may require your aid and your sympathy; and to your care Jesus now commends them. The widow, whose conduct is marked by sobriety and meekness; the poor, whom no hardships can drive to impatience against God, or to injustice to man; the virtuous young person, who

has none to foster his talents, and whose spirit is broken in employments far beneath those to which his eager mind aspired ; and the old disciple, who is neglected by unfeeling connections,—these are the relations of the Saviour, and to your kind attentions he asserts their claim. He charges you to visit these fatherless and widows in their affliction. The voice of joy hath forsaken their dwelling, and the shadow of death covers it. He charges you to relieve these poor saints. How comfortless is the poor man's hovel, and how pitiable is the cold and the hunger to which he must often submit ! He charges you to patronize that friendless youth. How sad is his condition, who is excluded from instruction for which his heart pants, and from situations which he might fill with honour and advantage ! These aged saints he commands you to respect and to soothe. How painful is the state of the old man, who hath no friendly arm on which to lean, no friendly ear into which to pour his complaints, whose weaknesses are exposed, and whose grey hairs are insulted by petulance, and pride, and folly ! If the orphan see not in you a father, nor the widow a judge ; if the poor find not in you those who wisely consider their case ; if the friendless youth solicits your influence in vain ; if the old man spreads out his shrivelled arms, and there is none to comfort him,—Christ will consider this as if it had been a neglect of himself. If on the other hand, we fulfil to them the laws of sympathy and kindness, Jesus will say, “ Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it to me.”

Have you received charges from dying friends ? let them be sacred to you. Have they enjoined you to take care of the infirm and the helpless ; to know the God of your fathers, and to serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; to renounce all connection with those, whose aim, they see, is to entice you to ruin ; to cultivate the good opinion of the prudent and the respectable ; to pay what they owe, that the stain of dis-

honesty be not attached to their name ; to maintain in their dwellings those altars to the Lord, which they have reared in them ; to aid those institutions of mercy of which they were active friends, and from the support of which flowed the purest pleasures ?—cherish these charges in your memory, and with them cheerfully comply. If we disregard the injunctions of dying friends, every memorial of them will have a tongue to upbraid us ; and the thought of meeting them at the judgment-seat, will fill the soul with horror. If, on the other hand, we fulfil them, we will have peace in our own minds. Fancy will exhibit them as gratified with our care to do all their pleasure ; and hope will whisper, that when we too have dying requests to make, to them our surviving friends will pay equal regard.

Let none of you dread, lest attention to the claims of piety and charity may injure your worldly interests. “ There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.” The chamber in your dwellings, set apart as the refuge of the homeless orphan, and as the resting-place of solitary age ; the wine and the oil in your presses, for the relief of the feeble and the diseased ; the garments in your wardrobes, for the naked ; the books in your library, for dispersion among those who are lifting up their voice for understanding ; and the money laid by you in store, for supporting and extending the institutions of Christianity, will bring the blessing of heaven on all that you have.

Now may the Spirit of love and goodness rest on your souls ; and may you go from the communion-table to bless your households, by the temper and the virtues which sweeten domestic life. Amen.

ADDRESS XLII.

JOHN XIX. 28, 29.

“ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar ; and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.”

THE incident mentioned in this passage will not be deemed trivial by those who consider it with due attention. All of you, probably, have witnessed the agonies of the dying. You have seen assiduous kindness moistening their lips, and attempting to pour down the reviving cordial. But in your Saviour's extreme thirst, vinegar was given to relieve it, and not by the hands of his disciples and his friends, but by those of the soldiers who were stationed round the cross. When David longed and said, “ O that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem !” three of his mighty men burst through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of this well, and brought it to him ; but when David's Lord cried out, “ I thirst !” the soldiers filled a sponge with vinegar, put it upon a reed, and lifted it to his mouth.

Reflect, Christians, on this complaint of your Saviour, “ I thirst.” Thirst is one of the most powerful appetites of the body, and when it is extreme, the uneasiness which it creates is intolerable. History relates the dreadful expedients to which men have had recourse for relieving it ; that battles have been fought by armies, to gain possession of wells and springs ; and that even a kingdom hath been sacrificed for a draught of water. The thirst which is felt in burning climates, and by men

racked by torture, must be painful beyond what we can conceive.

The thirst of our Lord arose from his bodily sufferings. The moisture of his body must have been exhausted by his sweat in the garden, by the scourging which he endured in the judgment-hall, by his painful ascent to Calvary, by his being so long suspended on the cross, and by the blood which incessantly trickled down from his head, his hands, and his feet. You have seen a person dying in a fever. You have seen his lips become parched, his tongue failing, and his heart faint; and if disease produces such effects, what influence must not the torture of our Lord have had upon him?

The anguish of our Lord's mind was another cause of this thirst. "A broken spirit dries up the bones." So intimate is the connection betwixt the mind and the body, that anguish, if it is deep and violent, drinks up the spirits. And never was there sorrow like unto the sorrow of Jesus, with which the Lord afflicted him in the day of his fierce anger.

Who is it that complains, "I thirst?" It is the Father of the rain. It is He who sends the springs into the valleys, to give drink to every beast of the field, and who refreshes with showers the grass and the lilies of the field. It is He who gives the vine that fruit which cheers the heart of man, and who hath opened to us wells of salvation, and fountains of living water.

Painful as this thirst was to our Saviour, it was endured for our happiness. In consequence of it, the mountains drop down new wine, and the hills flow with milk, streams break forth in the desert, and the voice of mercy cries aloud, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely!"

Did your Saviour thirst, and shall you fret and murmur on account of your want of the comforts of life? "Is it not enough that the disciple should be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord?" Did your Saviour suffer need, and shall you expect to abound?

Was his path rugged and comfortless, and shall you expect to "wash your steps with butter, and that the rock should pour you out rivers of oil?" Were clouds and darkness round about him, and can you expect that the sun of prosperity will always shine upon your heads? Consider Him who said, "I thirst," lest ye be weary and faint in your minds.

But at what period was it that our Lord made this complaint? The Evangelist tells us it was after our Lord had committed his mother to the care of John. He felt his thirst before, yet he complains not of it, nor asks relief, till he had provided a refuge for his mother in the kind attentions of the disciple whom he loved. Men generally imagine, that it is unreasonable to expect expressions or deeds of benevolence, friendship, or compassion, from persons under overwhelming distress. Listen to the language of many in sorrow, and you will hear only from them details of what they have suffered, or complaints of what they feel. To obtain relief for themselves, occupies their thoughts far more than to secure the comfort of a forlorn relation. But Christ's conduct shews, that the comfort of his desolate mother was dearer to him than any relief which his thirst required. Christ's care of Mary, expressed at any time, must have been highly gratifying; but it was peculiarly soothing when declared by lips which death was in a few moments to close, and suggested by a heart which cleaved to her, even while it was breaking with sorrow.

Divine generosity glorifies the Saviour's cross, but vile selfishness dishonours the deathbed of many. It wishes every ear open to its cries, and every heart engrossed with its sorrows. The deathbed of the selfish is a scene, which love neither honours with its tears nor with its recollection. Disgust checks the tears of the visitant, and shame reddens the cheek at behaviour so opposite to what the charities of nature and of religion prompt. From such a scene, we turn to the cross of Jesus. There I see a love strong in death; a love that

braves its horrors for our sake ; a love, which, while suffering for the salvation of millions, sought out for a mother a protector and a home.

Our Saviour made this complaint when he knew that all things were now accomplished. He saw his sufferings approaching to their close. He looks down on the sides of the mountain which he had climbed, a mountain burning with fire, and quaking with the tempest ; and he had but one step more to take, to reach the summit of rest and glory. Men may be mistaken as to the state of their affliction. After some violent convulsions, they may be ready to imagine, “ surely the bitterness of death is past,” and yet struggles more severe may be destined for them, ere they reach the place where the weary are at rest ; but Jesus knew all things. He knew the moment, and the pang, destined to be his last.

Our Lord would not utter this complaint till the period appointed for it was come ; so sacred, in his eye, was the order which his Father had fixed for his sufferings.

Christians, your souls thirst, but not from torture or anguish, like your Lord’s. They thirst in pious desire, and from a strong consciousness of your spiritual poverty. “ My soul thirsteth for God ;” he is here. My soul thirsteth for the water of life ; it flows before you. To thee, O Jesus ! I present the request of the woman of Samaria, “ Give me this water ;” but I will not say with her, “ that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw,” for I will seek thy favour while I live, and frequent thy table till I am called to living fountains above.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Our Lord made this complaint, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled. The Evangelist refers to Psalm lxix. 21. Our Saviour was determined that none of his adversaries should have it in their power to say, that the

minutest prediction concerning his sufferings was unaccomplished. The honour of his word must be dear to his heart, when, in the midst of his anguish, he discovered such a care that its prophecies might be fulfilled. On this book the stain of falsehood shall never be fixed ; and Jesus will not disregard on the throne, that volume which he was so eager to fulfil on the cross ? The companion of his cross is ever before him on his throne. Did he discover such anxiety for the accomplishment of prophecies of insulting and cruel treatment to himself, and will he be reluctant to fulfil those which respect his glory and his triumphs ? Was he solicitous that, as the Scriptures had said, his garments should be parted, and that insolent contempt should pour upon him all the indignities which had been predicted ; and will not he, according to the sure word of prophecy, reign to the ends of the earth, and bring adoring millions to his feet ? “ Believe his word, so shall ye be established ; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.”

Ere you leave this scene, Christians, consider the treatment which your Lord received in answer to his complaint. When men imagine that their complaints will be treated with neglect and with insult, they strive to suppress them. How painful is it to describe our sorrows to an inattentive ear, or to spread out our distresses before a careless eye ! How painful is it to hear the voice of scorn and of reproach, in answer to our lamentations ! But although Jesus knew the cruel insult which awaited him, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, he said, “ I thirst.” Where, at this moment, were you, ye angels, who do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word ? Where were you, ye just men made perfect, whom he causes to drink of the rivers of his pleasure ? Where were you, ye multitudes, to whom he cried on the last and great day of the feast, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink,” that ye came not to quench the Saviour’s thirst ? When Hagar was greatly distressed for thirst

in the wilderness of Beersheba ; when she went to a distance from her son, that she might not see him die, and lifted up her voice and wept, God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water, and she went and filled her bottle with water, and gave him to drink. But the Father of mercies left the relief of his beloved Son to men, strangers to pity. This vessel of vinegar was set near the cross for the use of the Roman soldiers, whose common drink was vinegar diluted with water ; but when our Lord cried, “ I thirst,” they did not mix it with water, but gave him the vinegar alone, in a contemptuous manner, and with no humane or compassionate view.

You see, Christians, the sponge filled with vinegar at your Saviour’s mouth ; but have you not observed the hand of Divine Justice raising to his lips a cup, the wine of which is red and full of mixture ? Behold him wringing out the dregs of it. It was of this cup, when he beheld it prepared for him, that he once said, “ Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.”

Behold with what calmness Christ bears this insulting treatment from his enemies ! When he was hungry, he saw a fig-tree, and “ he came to it if haply he might find some fruit thereon, but finding none, he said, let no fruit grow on thee from henceforth, and it withered away.” His thirst was more violent now than his hunger was then ; yet, O divine meekness ! instead of speaking to them in his wrath, and consuming them with his lightnings, he opens not his mouth.

Did Jesus receive thus calmly the sponge of vinegar, and shall not you take, without a murmur, the cup of sorrow from your Father’s hand ? It is a cup prepared for you in wisdom and love. “ The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it ?”

In the day of your affliction, your distress may be neglected, and even insulted ; but complain not that no cordial is administered to you, when your Saviour was

thus treated? Envy not the wicked when they eat their costly delicacies, drink wine in bowls, and chaunt to the sound of the viol; for Jesus can infuse a sweetness into your cup of cold water, and bless your bread and your herbs.

It is seldom that criminals, even while receiving the due reward of their deeds, are treated with cruelty. Every attention is shewn them, of which their condition admits. But though the ear of Jesus was never shut to the voice of misery, though he was the Holy One and the just, and though his behaviour in suffering was so meek and so patient, he was denied the meanest comforts by those who were so much indebted to his goodness and long-suffering. At this melancholy view of human depravity, your hearts are sighing. There is nothing which the corrupted mind hates so implacably as goodness; and the brighter it shines, the more is its malignity stimulated. Bless God that you have been renewed in the spirit of your minds, and labour to cherish a disposition to beneficence, and a delight in acts of goodness.

You feel at this moment indignation at the conduct of these soldiers; but take heed that you do not act in a similar manner to your Lord. If ever you are deaf to the cries of the poor; if ever you regard their miseries with a disdainful eye; if by reproaches and upbraidings, you feed them with wormwood, and give them water of gall to drink, you are treading in the steps of these men. But I hope better things of you, although I thus speak.

Thirst not after any vicious indulgence. Imagine not that sin has any new pleasures, which you may enjoy with less injury to the peace of your souls, than those which you have found to be more bitter than wormwood. Contemplating Jesus receiving the vinegar, can you look with delight on intemperance mingling her draught? The drunkard's mirth is madness, and his habits are chains of darkness.

To you, Christians, Jesus saith, as he did to the woman of Samaria, "Give me to drink." Give him to drink of Jacob's well. The graces of religion, in lively exercise, are delightful to his heart. I trust his language to that person, while she remained ignorant of his character, is not applicable to you; "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." I have received him as the unspeakable gift of God—a gift which claims my everlasting gratitude; and of his living water I have been drinking, and it shall be in me a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

ADDRESS XLIII.

JOHN XIX. 30.

"He said, It is finished."

THE last words of the dying are listened to with solemn attention, and preserved with care in the memories of their surviving friends. You have now heard, Christians, the last words which were uttered by your Redeemer upon earth, and by you they can never be forgotten.

But what was finished? The sufferings of Jesus were now at an end. Our Saviour's life on earth had been spent in toil and sorrow; and its closing scene had been marked by excruciating torture of body, and by anguish of mind, which no heart could have borne but his own. But when he uttered this shout, he saw the sword of justice returning to its scabbard, the powers

of darkness fleeing from his presence, and that mansion opening its gates to receive him, where he should enter into peace. A man in a severe illness contemplates with delight the symptoms of a favourable crisis. The shipwrecked seaman sits on the beach, and surveys, in transport of soul, the devouring deep from which he has been rescued, and the waves and billows with which he struggled. How exquisite must have been our Saviour's delight, when he saw these floods retiring which had gone over his soul, and that anguish abating which had wasted his strength ! O Lord Jesus, thy days of grief are now terminated. No more shalt thou appear as a man of sorrows. I see angels welcoming thee to thy rest, and joy eternal settling on thy head.

This exclamation of our Lord intimates that the ceremonial system was now abolished. The ceremonial law was given for the wisest purposes. It was a shadow of good things to come. Burdensome as it was, the Jews were strongly attached to it. By the distinction which it maintained betwixt them and other nations, their vanity was flattered, and their confidence in the Almighty's peculiar regard to Israel was confirmed. They lost sight of the purposes for which it was appointed. They imagined that when the Messiah came, he would make their religion the religion of the world ; they figured to themselves the idols of the heathen falling before the ark of God, and the kings of the earth bringing their honour and their glory into the temple of Jerusalem. But when our Lord gave himself a sacrifice for us, all the prefigurations of his death were superseded. The true bread is come down from heaven, the fountain of life is opened, and the Lamb of God bleeds. When our Lord uttered these words, the protecting angel departed from the temple of Sion, and the Roman armies soon razed it to the foundations. Mortifying as this was to the Jews, it was an event most happy to the Gentile world. The Father may now be worshipped every where in spirit and in truth. Our

religious rites are few and simple, and our sacrifices are those of justice and mercy. Look, then, Christians, to the cross of Jesus, and behold your passover sacrificed for you. Behold him by whom grace and truth came, and by whom types and shadows passed away. Behold him to whom every rite pointed as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

This shout announced that the powers of darkness were now vanquished. "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." The horrid corruptions in sentiment and practice, which covered the earth, proved the extent of Satan's influence. The reformers, who had risen up in various ages to correct the errors and vices of men, found the torrent too violent to be stemmed by their efforts. The work was reserved for the "Man of God's right hand." Our Saviour, in the course of his life, had manifested his power in repelling the temptations of the devil, and in driving him from the bodies and souls of which he had taken possession. But it was on Mount Calvary that the decisive battle was fought. There every effort was made by the legions of hell to defend their conquests, and to drive back, with dishonour, the Redeemer, who came to take the prey from the mighty. Behold him "spoiling principalities and powers, and making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross." And can you forbear exclaiming, "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously?" The joy of other victories is often mixed with feelings of regret for the slaughter by which they have been gained; but there is no circumstance attending this victory to mar the fervour or the pleasure of your triumph. Satan, with his temptations, you may now defy; for his head is bruised, and his power is broken. The world, with its pleasures and its evils, you may now set at nought; for to you it is crucified by the cross of Christ. Over death, with its terrors, you may now exult; for Christ hath destroyed it. "O sing unto the

Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things : his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory !”

This exclamation of our Lord assures us, that a full atonement was now made for sin. The necessity of an atonement for sin has been almost universally felt. The wishes of the anxious heart, the inquiries of the wounded spirit, and the various methods by which men have attempted to appease the wrath of the Most High, are indisputable proofs of this. “It was not possible that the blood of bulls or of goats could take away sin,” or that the tears of penitence could wash away the stains of guilt. “But what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God hath accomplished by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and by a sin-offering condemning sin in the flesh.” “He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities.” When our Lord cried, “It is finished,” he saw that reconciliation had been made for iniquity ; that redemption through his blood would be proclaimed to the ends of the earth ; that the hearts of the guilty would be sprinkled from an evil conscience ; and that deliverance from wrath might now, with the cheerful acquiescence of divine justice, be granted to all that should come unto God by him.

Look, ye disciples of Jesus, to the cross of your Lord. Are you grieved that your hearts are so cold ? What can fill them with holy fervour like the contemplation of your Saviour’s love ? Are you sighing under the consciousness of guilt ? and are you tempted to conclude that your sins are too atrocious to be forgiven ? Behold the blood poured out, which cleanseth from all sin !

It is to be lamented that so much ingenuity and learning have been employed to expunge from the Christian system a doctrine so soothing as this is to the troubled heart. Let the adversaries of this doctrine go to the abode of the man who, after a long struggle with

remorse and despair, hath obtained mercy and peace through the blood of the Lamb ; let them mark the serenity of his countenance, and the unspeakable joy of his bosom ; let them listen to the grateful effusions of his heart to God, and follow his steps of active charity in relieving his fellow creatures. And can you, after seeing all this, bear the thought of driving him back to the fearful pit, of making his eyes again a fountain of tears, and of putting again into his hand the instrument of death ? Will it gratify you to hear him exclaim, “ The pleasing delusion is past ; hell is open for me, and I am undone for ever ! ” If there is a spark of compassionate feeling in the heart, it must shrink from this deed of horror, and lead the disputer to question the soundness of speculations which tend to consequences so tremendous, and which can only be maintained by wresting the Scriptures.

To you, Christians, the atonement of Christ appears a doctrine full of grace and truth. You have already received it ; but I beseech you, at this solemn moment, to open your hearts wide to its cheering and sanctifying influence, “ to wash your robes, and to make them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

In his dying shout, our Lord intimated to his followers that a perfect pattern of excellence for their imitation had now been exhibited. The saints, under the former dispensation, left us an example of various graces and virtues ; but these were attended with many imperfections. In the character of Christ we see nothing but the purest and the brightest excellencies.

In his intercourse with his Father, he shewed the confidence of faith, the fervour of prayer, and the patience of hope. In mingling with his friends, he instructed us how to sympathise with the sorrows, and to

bear with the infirmities, of our brethren. In his conduct to his enemies, he taught us the meekness which suppresses every emotion of revenge, and the generosity which overcomes evil with good. He taught us to receive applause with humility, and injuries with patience. In the wilderness, he teaches you to resist the most ensnaring suggestions of the devil ; in the garden, to bow in silence to the will of heaven ; and on the cross, to suffer and to die in patience and charity. In Christ's character, we see affability with its softest speech, and most winning smile ; charity weeping for him that was in trouble, and stretching out her hand to deliver the helpless ; zeal reproving, and entreating, and exhorting, with all long-suffering and doctrine ; fidelity, which no temptation could corrupt, and no threats could intimidate ; diligence, which never lost a moment in sloth, nor needed to regret one neglected opportunity of usefulness ; and devotion, walking with God, and having her conversation in heaven. Having shewn us how to live, how to suffer, and how to die, Jesus said, " It is finished." I have left them an example that they should follow my steps. Let this example animate you to a patient continuance in well-doing. I exhort you to walk even as Christ also walked.

But why did your Lord utter this shout ere he expired ? He did it for the shame and the confusion of his enemies. It is, in this view, like the shout of the victor increasing the mortification and terror of the vanquished. The enemies of Jesus said, when he appeared among them, " This is the heir, come let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours ;" but how much were they disappointed, when they found that their devices to ruin him had issued in his aggrandisement, and in their complete dishonour ! Nor could their disgrace be concealed. This exclamation of the conqueror proclaimed it to angels and to men. It shewed that they could have no hope of renewing the contest. With him they could struggle no more ; and though they might oppose

the progress of his kingdom in the world, the whole earth should be filled with his glory.

What added to the shame of our Lord's enemies was this, that he stood alone in the struggle. There was no hand but his lifted up, and that hand "dashed in pieces the enemy." Now was the promise accomplished to the Redeemer, "His enemies will I clothe with shame." This shout of the Saviour was confounding to his enemies, as the curse denounced against the serpent in Eden was; as the sentence of condemnation at the great and terrible day of the Lord will be. Never was shame poured on objects that deserved it more, or that could feel it more painfully.

But Jesus uttered this dying shout, to shew his complacency and exultation in the completion of our redemption. The more arduous and important any work is, the more pleasure do we feel when it is accomplished in a proper manner. In the prospect of his last struggle, Jesus was "amazed and very heavy." But now, when he saw glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and disappointment to all the plots and efforts of hell, the most triumphant gladness took possession of his heart. When the world was created, God saw what he had made, and pronounced it good; and could Jesus feel less complacency when he saw it redeemed? This was a complacency worthy of the redemption that inspired it, and of the generous bosom that felt it;—a complacency which never decays, and which it is the will of his Father that he should for ever cherish. It was a pledge of the exultation which he will feel "when the end shall come, when he shall have put all his enemies under his feet, and when he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all."

Our Lord uttered this shout for the joy of his friends. Who can tell what influence it had on his disciples who stood by the cross? It would strike them that more was intimated by it, than that his struggle with death was terminated. They would recollect his statements

of the great objects of his life and sufferings ; and they must have felt emotions of exultation in this solemn assurance of their full accomplishment. This effect we know it had upon them, when the tumult of grief and fear had completely subsided, and when the resurrection of their Lord had convinced them that all was well. These words, " It is finished," have often been the consolation of the penitent, the rest of the dying, and the triumph of the redeemed from among men. Christ's failure in this work would have been our ruin. " The redemption of the soul is precious ;" and had not he accomplished it, it must have ceased for ever. Christ's success is our glory and our salvation. Let these words be ever present to your view ; study their amazing import ; search out their hidden consolations, and may this joy of the Lord be your strength.

You have seen the malignity of sin in your Lord's sufferings ; ye beheld it put away by the sacrifice of himself : but I trust you feel a stronger detestation of it than ever, even while you rejoice in hope of escaping the damnation to which it leads.

Consider, Christians, what example you are leaving to the friends who shall survive you. Can you bear the thought that your relations shall never think of your conduct, but to mark the vices which they should abhor, and the follies which they should shun ? Is it not your wish that they should trace your footsteps in the way to Sion, and testify to the honour of your memory, that you lived and died like saints ?

In a short time your struggle with corruption and with sorrow shall close. You feel that you cannot be fully happy till the existence of sin is terminated in your hearts. That period is so near to some of you, that while God gives me this charge with respect to you all, " Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God ; say unto them, your iniquity is pardoned ;" he commands me thus to address others, " Your warfare is accomplished." To them Christ himself says, " I will

not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, till I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father." Be ye therefore sober and diligent ; watch unto prayer ; and be faithful to the death, that you may finish your course with joy. Amen.

ADDRESS XLIV.

JOHN XX. 3—8.

" Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre : so they ran both together, and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying ; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie ; and the napkin that was about his head not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed."

THE visit paid by these two disciples to the tomb of Jesus, suggests to you, Christians, much suitable instruction, and is related in a way which admirably corresponds with the views previously given us in the gospel history of their character.

Peter seems, on this occasion, to have discovered no symptoms of that terror, which, in the hall of the high priest, led him so basely to deny his Master ; but shines forth in all the usual boldness and ardour of his spirit. His approach to the sepulchre was not without danger, for he had reason to suppose that he might be discovered there by some of those who had suspected his connection with Jesus ; and that they would shew little

mercy to him now, when he was proving, by his conduct, the falsehood of his declaration, "I know not the man;" yet he went forward, yea, such was his eagerness, that he ran to the sepulchre.

Peter's heart must have melted within him, with strong emotion, when he thought of seeing the corpse of his Lord, and the place where it lay. Ah! that eye is closed in death, whose look expressed to my heart a reproof so striking, and pity so tender. Death hath now sealed up those ears, which conveyed to his heart the sounds of my denial,—sounds which were to it like the piercings of a sword. No longer shall my kind Monitor warn me of the danger to which I expose myself, by my rashness and folly. Oh that I had heard from his lips, ere he went to the house of silence, the assurance of forgiveness! Can I bear the thought, that indignation and horror at my base conduct were the last feelings of his heart?

The surprise which Peter felt when he found the tomb empty of all except the grave-clothes, would call up a new train of feelings. Have his enemies removed his body, to subject it to new indignities? Or hath his Father buried it, as he did the body of Moses, in some secret place, lest misguided veneration should pour over this spot idolatrous honours, or lest horrid cruelty should mangle, in its triumphs, the corpse of him whom it hated even in death?

Christians, ye are not come this day to the grave where Jesus lay, "He is not there, he is risen as he said," but to the table where he sits. Come with the earnestness, the fortitude, and the repentance of Peter; and hear the voice which invites those who have fallen like him, "Return, O backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." Peter thought that he would find the face of his Lord covered, or if uncovered, that it would be pale and ghastly; but you shall see on it the power of an endless life, and the kindness of everlasting mercy.

John came with Peter on this occasion, nay, he appears to have reached the sepulchre before him, yet went not in, till encouraged by the boldness of his fellow disciple, who searched every corner of the tomb with care. It is not difficult to conjecture what were John's feelings in coming to our Lord's grave. Cold is that bosom on which it was my peculiar privilege to lean. His heart no more meets mine. No more is his left hand under my head ; no more doth his right hand embrace me. The disciple whom Jesus loved, is the title with which he honoured me, and which shall be graven on my breast ; but, ah ! death hath broken that heart to me so affectionate. " I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living."

O ye who, like John, love the Saviour fervently ; O ye who are complaining of the weakness of your affection to Jesus, and who are wishing that you could love him with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind ; you are now on a spot where his love hath often been shed abroad in the heart ; where he hath clasped the pious in his arms, and pressed them to his bosom ; and where he hath said, " Fear not, I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." These two disciples did not find Jesus in the tomb ; but we cannot doubt his presence in this place when such are his words, " I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse ;" I am come to receive the homage of devotion, and to reward it with the blessings of my love.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Interesting were the objects which these disciples saw in the tomb of our Lord. They saw the linen clothes lying, and the napkin that was about his head wrapped together in a place by itself. How forcibly do these circumstances proclaim the calmness and the majesty with

which our Lord left the sepulchre ! The shroud, and the robes of death, are objects unpleasant to nature. The heart sinks when we see them wrapped about others, and when we think on them as preparing for ourselves. But remember that Jesus Christ wore the garments of the grave. Around that body in which divine excellence dwelt, they were wrapped. Around that head, which was as the most fine gold, that napkin was bound. Where insulting cruelty had fixed the crown of thorns, sorrowing, respectful friendship placed this napkin ; and that head, which, in the retreat of devotion, had often been filled with the dews of the night, was cold and silent, like the stone on which it lay.

Christ laid those garments of the grave aside. He wore them but a short time ; you must wear them longer. He laid them aside by his own power ; from you they shall be stripped off by the hand of corruption. But to you it shall be said in due time, “ Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Sion ; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem.” Christ hath left something behind him in the grave, as a token that he hath been there. He has left that napkin to intimate how tenderly he will bind the aching head of sorrow ; and these clothes, to assure us that the fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints, shall be ours.

Put on, Christians, the humility, self-denial, and superiority to the world, in which Jesus lived and died, and to you these words shall be accomplished, “ Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, they shall walk with me in white.” Let me have as little confidence in my own attainments, as I shall feel in that hour when death shall summon me to judgment ; and let me be as much convinced of the vanity of the world, as I shall be at the moment when I am quitting it for ever.

Depart from the communion table, as Peter went from the tomb, “ wondering in himself at that which

was come to pass," at the body being taken away, and the clothes remaining. But have not you more sublime objects of admiration, in what you have seen and heard in the purchase of redemption, and in the application of it to your souls? "Marvellous, O Lord, are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." His name shall be called wonderful. Awake, my dull heart, to admiration more exalted, and to praise more glowing. Let not your admiration incite you to fanciful, presumptuous, and idle speculation; but to inquiry directed by the light which shines in a dark place, guarded by humility, and breathing in prayer.

Depart from the communion table, as John retired, in the spirit of faith; for of him it is said, that when he went in to the sepulchre, he saw and believed. He believed that his Lord was risen; and O, what joy and peace would not that yield to his mind, like the calm of the ocean to the seaman who has been tossed with tempests! And after a scene so much adapted to confirm your faith, and after being sealed with the holy spirit of promise, shall you go away full of doubts and fears? Let not your faith be shaken by temptation, nor by the cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. "Add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity." With such a lovely train, faith will shine before men to its own honour, and to the delight of him who is its Author and Finisher. Before such a scene, the man whose faith is without works will be put to shame; and those who are most unfriendly to the belief of the gospel, may be constrained to admit, that the brightest excellence of character originates in its influence. Joy and peace must accompany such believing; and its certain issue shall be, "your receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."

When you visit the graves of your friends, and looking, in imagination, beneath the stone, or the turf, the dust, and the boards laid over them, find them covered

with worms, rejoice in hope, that the time will come when they shall quit these dark abodes, and leave every trace of mortality and corruption behind them. Where you stretched the shroud of death, Jesus shall spread the robe of immortality; where you fixed the napkin, he will place the crown; and where you wept, he will triumph. "Comfort one another with these words."

ADDRESS XLV.

JOHN XX. 27.

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless but believing."

THESE gracious words of our Lord to Thomas, he now addresses, Christians, to you. Very different language did Thomas deserve; and very different language do you deserve for stubborn unbelief and insensibility. Jesus might have said, I have seen, with indignation, the incredulity which set at nought my repeated assurances of the certainty of my resurrection, and which suddenly repelled the testimony of thy fellow-disciples as an idle fable. Behold in my face the frown of determined abhorrence, and in my hand the glittering sword whetted for thy destruction! Instead of this, he speaks to him in the most indulgent language of pity and of love. Too often, Christians, have you questioned the testimony of your Lord, and doubted the constancy of his love; yet he calls you to a scene where he lays open all

his heart, that you may be filled with joy and peace in believing.

Behold, Christians, in your Saviour's hands and feet, the reality and the painfulness of his sufferings. His groans were not the groans of a fictitious sorrow; they arose from sufferings of the most agonizing kind. The hands which had been so often stretched out to a disobedient and gainsaying people, were expanded on the cross, and fixed to it by large nails. And can this be the treatment of hands which had wiped so many cheeks of sorrow, and raised so many fallen? Those feet which had gone about doing good, were fastened to the cross by nails also; and thus suspended, he hung in the severest torture for hours.

Behold in your Saviour's side the certainty of his death! Had he been alive when the spear of the soldier was thrust into his side, he must have died of that wound; but ere that outrage was committed on his body, his breath had gone forth. The object of his mission could not have been accomplished, nor his people saved, nor his triumph completed, without dying. That pale face you contemplate, not with pity only, but with exultation. Your hope expires not with him; it springs up from the spot where the last drops of his blood fell. My hope flourishes, for it is Christ that died.

Behold in Christ's hands and side the certainty of his resurrection! He who now sits on the throne, is the same Jesus who once suffered on the cross. It is no pretender to the character of Christ, but the same meek and gracious Saviour. And if his body be the same, can there be a change in his heart? Is that gentleness gone, which rendered his deportment so encouraging to the feeble and the timid? Is that tenderness gone, to which sorrow never appealed in vain? No. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, a proof that he is not ashamed of his sufferings for you! The warrior, returning home in triumph from the field of battle,

glories in showing the scars of his wounds. These he considers as tokens that his laurels were fully earned, and that he deserves the plaudits of his country. Jesus delights in the memorials of his sufferings, as testimonies, that though the struggle was arduous, his zeal and his courage bore him through with glory. On these memorials of his sufferings, the blessed spirits of heaven look, and exclaim, "Thy right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power; thy right hand hath dashed in pieces the enemy."

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the memorials of suffering, which he presents in his intercession. "I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, stood a Lamb as it had been slain." And can such an Intercessor be disregarded? Can such arguments in prayer fail to influence the Judge of all? "The blood of sprinkling speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." How consoling is its sound to the desponding heart! and how resistless is its eloquence in the court of heaven! It is infinitely more precious to God, than all the tears that ever dropped in penitence, and than all the blood that ever flowed in martyrdom.

Now, Christians, are your looks and your hearts fixed on the hands and side of a crucified Lord? No object can be found which hath such claims on my attention as this; and to look and love, to admire and to adore, must be my employment now, and shall be my employment for ever.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the reality and the strength of his love. It was not a love in word and in tongue, but a love demonstrated by the most astonishing deeds, and shewn to be perfect in sufferings. Have any of you laboured under acute and lingering diseases, during which a beloved friend watched over you, and soothed you like a ministering angel? With

what interest do you not contemplate the effects of anxiety, and of the want of rest and of food, on their bodies? The pale countenance, the sunk eye, and the emaciated body, shew what their care of you hath been, and what it has cost them. And doth not gratitude swell the heart, and vow that their kindness shall never be forgotten? Let such be your feelings when you contemplate these evidences, that Christ loved you, and gave himself for you.

Behold, in your Lord's hands and side, bodily pain sanctified and mitigated for you. When disease shall attack your limbs, and oppress your hearts; and when acute pain shall be like a sword in your bones,—think on the nails piercing through our Lord's hands and feet, and you will learn to suffer without a murmur, nay, to glory in tribulation, saying, “I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.” Into these wounds he will drop a healing balm. Alas! into his own, none was poured: yea, at the very period when he was thus tortured, “the arrows of the Almighty stuck fast within him, the poison of which drunk up his spirit.” “He will make you to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which he hath broken may rejoice.”

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the most powerful reasons why you should no more grieve him by your sins. What are these wounds, these additional wounds, in thine hands? “They are the wounds which I have received in the house of my friends.” Are the wounds in my hands so small, that you must increase their number, or enlarge their extent? Is the gash in my side too slight an evidence of my patience, that I must permit you to pierce me to the heart? Lord, I cannot bear the thought of offending thee any more. “I will keep thy statutes; O forsake me not utterly!”

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the most powerful reasons against unbelief. Can you doubt either his willingness or his power to save? If he had not

been willing to save, he would not have died. If he had not been mighty to save, could he have risen from the dead? "Fear not, only believe." What is that state of mind, by which your own tranquillity will be most fully secured, and the honour of your Redeemer most effectually promoted? It is this, "strong in the faith."

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, the most animating motives to the most painful duties of mortification. "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into everlasting fire." Shall the blessed body of Jesus be mangled, and the cursed body of death be spared? Indulgence to sin is indignity to your Lord, and cruelty to yourselves.

Behold, in your Saviour's hands and side, a pledge that death shall not do you any real injury. You may count his darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear. Christ's hands and feet were pierced, that the "weak hands might be strengthened, and the feeble knees confirmed." You may have reason to say with Job, in the hour of death, "I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder. His archers compass me round about; he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare; he poureth out my gall upon the ground;" but the remembrance of Christ's wounds will quell the risings of impatience, and suggest the delightful hope, "He hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; he will revive us, and we shall live in his sight."

Behold, in Christ's hands and side, a pledge, that the same bodies which you now have, shall be raised again. The face which compassion softened, and where benevolence shone, shall again attract the eye of friendship. The hands which have ministered to the wants of sorrow, shall wave the palm of victory, and grasp the feet of the King of Glory. O, how precious is this hope to

him whose heart cannot leave the grave! The insensate clay, which you saw gathering blackness, you shall behold shining with the splendours of immortality, and all its pulses throbbing with kindness and with rapture. And while memory searches out the traces of the cruelty of enemies, and of the workings of grace,—when of the penitent's cheek she says, here the tears of contrition flowed,—and of the confessor's forehead, here the brand of infamy, for the name of Jesus, was fixed,—it will serve to enhance their beauty, and to heighten their glory.

Now, since objects so wonderful and so affecting are to be seen here, let them have your constant attention, and your unwearied regard; let them influence every act of devotion, and let them animate the whole obedience of life.

ADDRESS XLVI.

JOHN xxi. 17.

“He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?”

OUR Lord's continuance on earth for a season with his disciples, after his resurrection, and the affectionate intercourse which he maintained with them, were ordained of heaven for the most important purposes. We have known men, who, when their calamities were over, have punished with severity all who had forsaken them, or slighted them, in the day of their affliction. And hath Christ risen from the dead to take vengeance

on the disciples who abandoned him, or the familiar friend who denied him? No! he comes from the tomb with a heart glowing with love and pity. Unaltered by the pains of death, and by the felicities of paradise, and loving his own that were in the world to the end, he saw them frequently, during forty days, and gave them various assurances of his generous forgiveness and complacency. His behaviour to Peter gives us a view of his heart, that is peculiarly delightful; and, on his inquiries respecting his love, you may meditate with profit at the altar of God.

But why did Jesus inquire respecting Peter's love to him, rather than after any other grace? Peter's conduct had made his love to his Master peculiarly questionable. The omniscient Redeemer knew the state of Peter's heart; but to his fellow disciples, and to the world around, his behaviour must have suggested such unfavourable conclusions as these with regard to him. Can he love Christ, who disowned him in the depth of his affliction; who, to the insults of his enemies, added the treachery of a friend; who followed him into the high priest's hall to render the denial more open, and sealed it with blasphemies to gain it credit? This forward plant, which seemed to overtop every other, had no proper root, and is now withering away. But by our Lord's questions, and the answers given to them, he meant to lead the disciples to more charitable ideas of their humbled associate; and to shew them, that the plant which they thought twice dead, would rise, and flourish like the cedar trees beside the waters.

Peter had been professing penitence for his crime. Our Lord wished to shew, by this question, that his anguish arose, not from a sense of shame merely, nor from an apprehension of the vengeance of his offended Master, but from a more generous principle. I have wounded the bosom that cherished me, and renounced connection with him at whose side I ought to have counted it my glory to die. Peter's tears flowed not so

much from this idea, What will my brethren think of me? but from this thought, The best of Masters must abhor me as a traitor: I am a deserved outcast from the kindest of hearts. We read of the faith of devils, and of the sorrows of the damned; but in none of them do we find the faith or the penitence which work by love. The penitent clasps the feet on which his tears are falling; and his expressions of holy admiration of the Saviour, mingle with the language of self-abhorrence.

Love was a grace peculiarly necessary for Peter, in the great work in which he was now to be employed. He had services to perform, and dangers to brave, which would appear intolerable to every heart where love to Jesus did not reign. Christian love hath braved the dungeon and the scaffold, and all that the world holds dear it has laid down at the Saviour's feet.

But why does our Lord put this question to Peter three times? When we repeat a question, it is either when we do not understand, or are not satisfied with the answer which is given; but Peter's reply was so modest, so simple, and so sincere, that it was most pleasing to our Saviour. Our Lord said to him, the third time, Lovest thou me? to impress him more strongly with his three-fold denial of him. Peter, by this, was led to think, My Master remembers my unworthy conduct; but it is neither to upbraid me with it, nor to punish me for it. It is to shew me how much he can forgive, and that I, having so much forgiven me, should love much. Our Lord repeated this question a third time for our sakes, to shew us, that we are not to be easily satisfied with the appearances of religious affection, but are thoroughly to search our hearts, and to try our ways.

The questions which our Lord put to Peter, he now proposes to you. They are put to every heart, and every heart must answer them. It is not every answer which will please him; and the inquiry he will not

allow to be trifled with, nor evaded. What a variety of answers do I hear given to these questions from the communion table ! One disciple says, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee. The witness of the Spirit with mine, is so clear and decided, that I think I can appeal to the omniscient God himself, that my love is sincere. To him my heart cleaves : I can take an interest in nothing unconnected with him ; and my soul counts him its all.

I hear another disciple saying, I wish to love Jesus, though I dare not say that I do so. Had I my wish, every thought of mine would fix on him ; every expression would magnify him ; and every moment would be devoted to him. Oh that I had a heart where he reigned unrivalled, and a life sacred to his glory and to his laws !

But another disciple says, in a voice which indicates timidity and hesitation, I am so perplexed and confounded with doubts and fears, that I cannot speak either of my attainments or my wishes. The consciousness of my guilt and folly makes me dumb. I am so troubled, that I cannot answer. But love to Jesus breathes in that sigh, shines in that blush, and weeps in that tear. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Our Lord's three questions to Peter, shew us, that to love him is the principal thing in religion. "The end of the commandment is charity." Without love, the most splendid gifts will be but like the decorations of a corse, which are forgotten amidst the ghastliness of its features, and the noisomeness of advancing corruption. Without love to Christ, praise is but the flattery of the lips, and obedience the reluctant drudgery of the slave. But where love operates, the lip of praise is touched with

a live coal from the altar, and keeping his commandments is regarded as the whole duty of man. Where love is wanting, in vain will you seek for the faith that hath seen the Redeemer's glory, or for the repentance which mourns for him. There is no grace in religion which is not animated, and guided in its exercise by love. Patience, is love kissing the rod. Resignation, is love meekly receiving the cup of sorrow from a Father's hand. Repentance, is love washing the feet of Jesus with tears. Joy, is love happy in its object. Zeal, is its holy ardour, and gentleness its soft impression. Some represent religion as a mere exercise of the powers of the understanding, but it is the heart which Jesus claims; and the speculation which leaves it uninterested, is like the beam which makes the snow more dazzling, but reaches not the plants that lie dead beneath it. Let no idle dread of enthusiasm, and no vain boastings of a rational religion, ever induce you to look with pleasure on any system where Christ is kept from the heart, and in which love to him is not held forth as all in all.

Ye disciples of Jesus, let your love to him abound. Consider how well he deserves your supreme affection. In him, every perfection which characterises the Godhead, and every grace that can adorn humanity, shine. Ye who are dazzled with the pomp of majesty, come and see him who is the brightness of the Father's glory. Ye who are charmed with the smile of benignity, and the meltings of compassion, come and see him who delighteth in mercy. Come and study a character, in which there is wisdom without one error, holiness without a stain, patience without a murmur, goodness ever active, and mercies ever new. I read his claims to my love in the lessons which he hath taught, so elevating to the mind, and so improving to its best principles; in the laws which he has given, which have restrained me from the crimes to which temptation prompted me, and have kept the sons of wickedness from attacking me. I read his claims to my supreme love in every scene of

his eventful life, from his birth to its close. I see love in the smiles of the babe of Bethlehem, and in the saddened countenance of the Man of sorrows. His prayers were the wishes, and his sermons the instructions of his love. What was his agony, but the struggle, and what was his death, but the perfect work of love. Love wrought in his miracles, pleaded in his prayers, melted in his tears, and gloried in his tortures. I feel his claims to my supreme love, in the rest he hath imparted to my burdened conscience, and in the hope which anticipates the raptures of the blessed. No affection, O Jesus, can reach thy matchless worth ; and no praise can do justice to thy excellent greatness.

Let your conduct demonstrate to the world around you, the sincerity of your love to Jesus. Let them see it in your enlightened zeal, in the purity of your manners, and in the extent of your charity. If your behaviour is stained by selfishness, by impurity, or by conformity to the world, they will either consider you as without love to Christ, or view it as a vain inoperative principle, from which no moral advantage results. "If ye love me," says our Lord, "keep my commandments." This is the decisive test of love.

Christians, what is the degree of your love to Christ ? Is it fervent and vigorous ? In this third question to Peter, he changes the word translated *lovest*, in the two former, for one more strong and emphatic, implying a degree of affection more ardent and tender. He will not quench the smoking flax ; he looks with complacency on the little child lisping his praise, and saying, in the first glow of religious desire, "O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee ;" but it is with peculiar delight that he regards the pious man, who in heart and in conduct "follows the Lord fully." Grow therefore in this grace. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." How sweetly will this encomium reward your most strenuous efforts to

excel in this fruit of the Spirit ! “ How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse ; how much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointment than all spices ! ” I trust, that at this solemn season the Redeemer has borne testimony to the sincerity and to the increase of your love to him. How delightful is it to hear him saying, Your affection to my name and law, is stronger than it was when you last approached my altar ! The love of many waxeth cold, but it is not so with yours. I hope that you have the pleasing consciousness of advancing in love to your Redeemer, from your increasing delight in his service, and from the subjugation of evil principles and passions within you. “ Let us walk in love,” and may God prepare us for that world where every heart and where every service are his.

But the desponding soul is still urging bitter things against itself, and saying, so far from having any evidence to present of increasing affection to the Redeemer, I dare not assert that I have any love to him whatever. I would give the world, to be able to declare with truth that I love my Redeemer ; but I dare not say it, lest I should be found a liar to him. But is his Sabbath your delight ? Is his word your hope ? Are his saints in your hearts, to live with them, and to die with them ? Are your affections detached from the world ? If such is the case, your hearts have been circumcised to love him. Are you willing to give your heart to another in preference to him ? That heart must be his, which will not, and which cannot be another's. I hear the Redeemer saying, that heart is mine. “ Fear not, I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by my name ; thou art mine.”

The manner in which our Lord acted to Peter, teaches you how to treat the backslider who professes repentance for his fall. There may be some who have gone to the altar of God with you, who have dishonoured their profession by acts of fraud and licentiousness, and by the

habits of slander and profanity, and who have returned to the ways of Sion, in appearance humble and contrite. Give not hastily credit to their protestations. The frozen serpent, which unsuspecting credulity placed in its bosom, was restored to vigour only to sting its cherisher. Try them thoroughly, and mark their conduct with care. Talk not to them in the haughty tone that says, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." Examine them not in a manner that indicates conviction of their insincerity. Speak to them in the charity which longs after them in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and convince them by your meekness, that their probation proceeds from no malignant jealousy, but from a vigilant regard for the honour of religion, and a benevolent anxiety about their future stability. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

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ADDRESS XLVII.

Acts xi. 18.

"Then hath God also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto life."

SUCH was the acknowledgment made by the Jewish converts, when they were convinced that it was the will of heaven, that the blessings and the spirit of true religion were now to be diffused among the nations. It may well appear to us both interesting and surprising, that God should grant repentance to the Gentiles.

Consider the state of the Gentiles under the former dispensation. During that period, the Jews only were

favoured with a revelation of the will of God. They had a law given them, by which was the knowledge of sin. They had a variety of sacrifices, which pointed out their guilt, and the expiation of it in the blood of the Lamb. They had messengers of the Lord in succession, who called them to repentance. But in what situation were the Gentiles? They had, indeed, reason and conscience; but reason was often perverted by a sophistry which confounded all moral distinctions, and conscience was stupefied by corrupting principles, and by the licentious indulgence of the passions. The idols whom they worshipped were of such a description, that it was utterly impossible they could feel any proper compunction for having offended them. The bleeding sacrifice was the substitute for sorrow. Many of those actions which revelation teaches us to abhor, they deemed innocent, calling for no contrition, and attaching no blame. How delightful is it to think, that the day-spring from on high hath arisen on such gross darkness; and that nations so long afar off, are now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus! "God is the Lord, who hath made light to arise to us. Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar."

Consider the multitudes to whom this blessing of repentance is now extended. It was not opened at the death of Christ to one Gentile tribe, but to all the world. Such was the will of our blessed Saviour before he left this earth, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name to all nations. This gift was to be made known, not to tribes merely that were civilized and polished by the culture of the arts and sciences, but to the most barbarous hordes, whose only abode was the hut or the cave, and whose only employment was war or the chase. It was to be granted, not merely to the Gentiles that bordered on Palestine, but to those who were afar off, as well as to those who were nigh. It was to be granted to men sunk lowest in corruption, even to the chief of sinners. Where

science never went to improve the character and condition of man, the gospel is destined to go, and to make him a partaker of a divine nature. The ferocious and stubborn savage, "the man without a tear," whom no danger could alarm, and no intreaties could soften; who, under the most dreadful torture, never discovered the least sensibility to pain, has been made to tremble at God's word, and to repent in dust and ashes. For eighteen hundred years has this grace been spreading, and millions it hath saved. It will continue, and extend its influence, "till all the ends of the earth remember and turn to the Lord." It will not be like the sun visiting the frozen waste of the Greenlanders for a few days, producing a scanty and short-lived verdure, and then retiring and leaving them to darkness and to the severity of the desolating blast, but it shall remain among the Gentile nations, to bring forth and to cherish the fruits of wisdom, righteousness, and peace. The multitude who stand before the throne and before the Lamb, are those whom repentance laid in the dust; and they who shout salvation, often groaned on earth in the anguish of contrition, "Woe is me, for I am undone!"

Christians, bless God, that by us in this island, the ministry of repentance has been received, and that to you this grace hath been given. Divided by the sea from the continent of Europe, we were not excluded from the grace which in the primitive times was spread over it. Think of the goodness of God in the blessed Reformation. For ages, genuine repentance was lost amidst the mummeries of superstition. While men were taught that pardons could be procured by money, and that the lacerating of the body was a proper substitute for the affliction of the soul, repentance could not exist. Gloomy indolence, midnight vigils, and ridiculous austerities, were extolled as the perfection of holiness. But God saved us from these delusions. He sent the apostles of the reformation to "preach every where that men should repent." There has been, I

trust, often joy in heaven over penitents in our land ; and joy in heaven over your repentance, ye disciples of Jesus.

You are come to wash Christ's feet with your tears. But is your repentance a repentance unto life? Is it such a penitence as is a sure evidence of spiritual life? There are emotions of regret for sin, which cannot be viewed as certain indications, that the man who feels them is alive unto God. The shame and misery which have resulted from iniquity have made it odious to many, who never felt a pang for it as the abominable thing which God hates. But the views which the true penitent has of the malignity of sin, are such as can alone result from the influences of the Spirit of conviction. The care which he takes to avoid it, and the efforts which he makes to cultivate virtues the most opposite to the corrupt tendencies of his nature, shew that God has been working in him, both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Is this your exercise, Christians? Do you now feel anguish for many sins which you once thought of with indifference? Is that anguish heightened by a perception of the share which they had in the sufferings of our Lord? Then is the heart of stone taken away, and the heart of flesh is given. The gushing of the waters from the rock, is a proof that it hath been smitten by Jehovah's rod. The branch bending with the weight of its clusters, shews its connection with a living and vigorous root.

Is your repentance a repentance from dead works? Have you renounced those sinful practices and habits, which indicate spiritual death, and issue in death eternal? No consideration can induce a true penitent to look on these with a favourable eye. No entreaties of acquaintances, no prospect of advantage, and no influence which they may have on the most popular characters, can reconcile him to any vices. He abstains from every appearance of evil, and thinks he cannot be too far removed from it. Repentance is the only prin-

ciple of his soul which he will permit to approach it ; and she goes to mark its malignity, and to blot out the gay colours in which it has been decked with her tears. Have ye, Christians, formed the resolution of Job, " As I have done iniquity, I will do so no more ? " Are you come to the table of Jesus to renew it ? Is it in the spirit of the Publican, when he prayed in the temple, that you have now come to the altar of God ? What, O God, are thy sacrifices ? " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit ; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Let repentance honour Jesus with its sighs and tears, its desires and its purposes, at his table ; and let it glorify him in the world by producing newness of life. Maintain habitually that abhorrence of sin, with which your hearts are now burning. Believe it, ye mourners in Sion, that repentance tends much to the true enjoyment of the present life. The sorrow of the world works death. Many have ruined their health, by the intemperance to which they have fled as a refuge from painful reflection. Often hath it produced a despair which has armed the hand with the instrument of death. Where the sorrow of the world is allowed to rage in its full sway, life is a burden, and earth is a hell. But imagine not that the penitence of true religion is thus gloomy and fatal, for the hope of mercy brightens all its darkness. There is something sweet in mourning over our ingratitude to our Redeemer, even though we know that he hath forgiven it. The consciousness that we deserved nothing but perdition from the hand of God, makes the smallest comfort appear doubly precious, and leads us to enjoy it with peculiar relish. The idea of our demerit, inclines us to submit with calmness to the severest afflictions. This consciousness of our own

defects renders us less alive to the reproach of the world ; and ill usage, which the proud man would avenge to his ruin, the penitent receives, saying, " Let him curse, the Lord hath bidden him." Your journey, ye mourners, lies through a weary land ; but repentance, like the pillar of cloud, will spread over you a shadow, which will keep you fresh and vigorous ; while they who frolic for a while in the sunshine, sink in lassitude and despondency.

Rejoice that repentance will certainly issue in life eternal. We cannot indeed view it as entitling us to heaven ; but it is one of those graces which all the heirs of glory possess, and all who live and die without it must perish. It is by the exercise of this grace, that the saints are formed to that temper which qualifies for the work of heaven. With it, the modesty, the humility, and the admiration of redeeming love, which characterize the blessed, are closely connected. It has been often said, that there will be no repentance in heaven ; it is true that there will be no sin to lament, to forsake, and to subdue above. But is it possible that the blessed in heaven can celebrate their Redeemer's name, without thinking of that guilt, misery, and pollution, from which he redeemed them ? And can they think of this without loathing it ? Viewing the Redeemer in his glory, sin will appear to you, when you arrive at the land of uprightness, peculiarly hateful ; and remembering what you did against God, you will feel yourselves stimulated to serve him day and night in his temple. The impressions of your own unworthiness will render the bliss of heaven more exquisitely sweet. Repentance will not have there her sackcloth, her lamentations, and her tears ; but her modest aspect, her devout acknowledgments, and her holy beauties, will mark her out as one of the objects in whom the God of all grace will be glorified. While the saints cast their crowns at Christ's feet, she will lay their hearts there.

Be thankful to God, ye disciples of Jesus, for this

inestimable gift. The heart which is softened by repentance, is the fittest for the feelings and for the hymn of gratitude. Bless him for that illumination of mind, that sensibility of conscience, and that abhorrence of sin, which he hath given you.

Listen with readiness of mind to the ministers of religion, "when they testify repentance towards God, as well as faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." Never let your appearance indicate that you have no relish for this topic. The doctrine and the grace of repentance are the glory of the Christian dispensation, and the high felicity of the Gentile world.

"Bring forth fruits that are meet for repentance." How happy will I be if I can bear you this testimony; behold this sorrow at the table of Jesus after a godly sort, "what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge; in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter!"

Entreat that God may grant to others the repentance which he hath given to you. Your children are sinners; let repentance be one of their first lessons. By teaching them to mourn for sin, you will keep them from fretting and weeping for trifles; and guard them against the vices by which they might ruin themselves, and break your hearts. Hold up repentance in the amiable light to them in which God has taught you to view it. And recommend a contrite spirit to all your associates in life, as what will give caution to the manners, sobriety to the mind, and comfort to the heart, and render affliction light, and prosperity safe; and, in order to give efficacy to your serious admonitions, let them be characterized, both as to their manner and their season, by devotion and benevolence.

Increase your efforts to convert the wicked from the error of their ways. Pray that it may be said of those who were once profane, from their seriousness; of those

once licentious, from their sobriety ; and of the dishonest, from their confession and restitution,—then hath God granted to them repentance unto life. And may this gift follow the steps of every missionary, and attend the opening of every Bible, till God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let us pray that this gift, so long denied to the Jews, may be granted to them. The greatest of their sins, their rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory, they have never yet thought of with sorrow. For many hundred years their hearts have known their own bitterness, but they remain strangers to the godly sorrow which worketh repentance to salvation. The means of repentance enjoyed by the Gentiles are around them, but from these they are kept back by the malignant prejudices of their hearts. It is promised that they shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him ; but we hear of a Jew weeping at the feet of Jesus as of a wonder. The vengeance of heaven hath pursued them wherever they have been scattered, yet have they not returned to the Lord. They look to Judea, but it is for a deliverer, who shall bid the oppressed go free ; not for a Saviour, “ who shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.” With the penitential Psalms of David in their hands, and zealous for the ceremonies of Moses, they have never yet offered the sacrifice of a contrite spirit. “ Behold the goodness and the severity of God ; on them severity, but on us goodness.” Implore, from the exalted Prince and Saviour, repentance and remission of sins to Israel, and that the means which are now employed for their conversion may be crowned with success. “ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved.” Amen.

ADDRESS XLVIII.

ROMANS V. 20.

“ Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

WHAT subject can be more suitable for your present meditations, ye disciples of Jesus, than the triumphs of grace? Oh that we saw their glory, and felt their influence, as the Apostle did! They shall occupy the contemplations and the praises of the good, when the trophies of this world have ceased to interest, and when the glories of time have passed away for ever.

Sin abounded in human nature. What a just picture of its debilitating and defiling influence do not these words present! “ The whole head is sick, and the whole heart is faint; from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, there is no soundness, but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” Sin has filled the understanding with errors and prejudices; it has set the will in determined opposition to the will of heaven; it has hurried the passions to the most destructive excesses, and placed the affections on objects which they should have abhorred. But consider how grace did much more abound in that nature, as assumed by the Son of God. Hear in what language of rapturous admiration the church describes the various excellencies of the Saviour. “ My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold. His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set. His cheeks are as a bed of spices, his lips like lilies dropping sweet-smelling myrrh. His hands are as gold rings set with the beryl. His legs are as pillars of mar-

ble set on sockets of fine gold. His countenance is like Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely." In him we see a judgment which deceit never beguiled; a will in all things conformed to his Father's; a joy never tainted with levity; a sorrow that never sunk into despair; anger without one spark of malignity; kindness, beneficent yet discriminating; lips without guile, and manners adorned with all the beauties of innocence.

Sin hath abounded in the world, but even there grace did much more abound, in turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Where idolatry practised its rites, religion offers her spiritual worship. Where gross impurities were practised, temperance mortifies the deeds of the body, and guards the chastity of the heart. Where impenitence was stubborn and audacious, contrition produces regret and holy fear. Where selfishness, intent solely on her own things, laughed at every sacrifice of piety, and at every effort of sympathy, zeal opens the lips for the honour of God, and charity the hand for the happiness of mankind. Where vain deceit uttered her impious speculations, heavenly wisdom shews the path of life.

The scriptures present to us the most wonderful examples of superabounding grace. Where seven devils dwelt in a Magdalene, there the seven spirits of God shed abroad their influence. How much more potent in communicating happiness was the benevolent ardour of Paul, than his persecuting zeal was in producing misery; and from the hands which were dragging the dying malefactor to the lake of fire, grace snatches him, and lifts him to paradise.

Christians, you can bear your testimony to the power and riches of divine grace. "The grace of the Lord Jesus was exceeding abundant to me." Once the spirit of Satan was mine; now I am changing into Christ's image, from glory to glory. Once sin was my delight; now it is my abhorrence. Sin made me a child of

wrath ; grace has made me an heir of God, and of life eternal. My rest is more sweet than ever my burden was oppressive, and my hope more bright than my despair was horrible. How gloriously does the Son of righteousness shine above the power of darkness, and the King of saints reign above the gates of hell ! You are come, I trust, to the communion table to celebrate the triumphs of grace, and to solicit a more abundant communication of it than ever. You are now to partake of the feast which it hath prepared ; and hope, in holy confidence, may exclaim, “ My soul shall be filled as with marrow and with fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips ! ”

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Ye disciples of Jesus, acknowledge, with lively gratitude, your obligations to divine grace. My feet were sliding into hell ; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. “ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits ; ” forget not any of his benefits, not even the least of them, for in the least of them sweet mercy shines.

What cry is that which reaches my ear, “ Grace, grace unto it ? ” It is the cry of just men made perfect, ascribing salvation to the grace of God, and hailing with such acclamations, as most suitable to its nature and design, “ the bringing forth of the head-stone ” of the building of mercy. You hope to raise that shout on the heights of Sion ; and let the riches and the power of grace be your song in the house of your pilgrimage. Let your faith be a dependence on grace, your psalms its praise, and your obedience its result.

Shew the powerful influence which the grace of God, when received, has on the temper and the conduct. Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid. Has the grace that delivered you from the pains of hell, left you at liberty to do its works ? “ Re-

turn to thy rest, O my soul ; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee ; for he hath delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." And what does the Psalmist add to this grateful acknowledgment ? Does he say, These eyes may now sparkle with impure desire ; these feet may carry me to the scene of iniquity ; and that soul may cherish any vicious wishes ? No ; " I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

Let the grace of God teach you to abound in charities ; and whatsoever ye do, do it seasonably. Your kindness will be lost to the senseless corse, and your intended admonitions will be too late for the departed soul. The caution which might have checked the young, when first entering on vice, will only excite their contempt when their hearts are hardened against the fear of God. And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily. Let your manner indicate that the heart goes with the hand in your gifts. " A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things."

Soon shall these words be applicable to you in their fullest sense, " By grace are ye saved," completely saved. Depart rejoicing in this hope ; for the grace which reigns to eternal life is your security for this felicity, and you cannot distrust it.

Be not lifted up with the favours which you may have enjoyed, for they are all of grace. The Saviour is more to be admired, loved, and delighted in, than all his gifts. " Precious salvation," has been the language of dying saints ; but I think I hear you saying, If I have the powers of speech and judgment at that season, my last expression shall be, " Precious Saviour." Think not that I call you to undervalue communion with God. Many wonderful objects had the apostle John seen ; yet he looks back on this as the grandest of them all, " We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

" As your sufferings abound, your consolations shall

much more abound." The Lord will give strength on the bed of languishing, and in the house of mourning ; where nature says, I have lost a friend, religion shall say, I have found the Saviour. Let the waves swell ; the Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many waters. He can make you richer in faith than you are poor in this world, and your soul more ready for heaven than your body is for the grave.

I exhort you, in fine, to labour much in the Lord. The Christian's motto has been said to be this, "All for Christ ;" because for him we should be willing to suffer the loss of all things. But may I not add to this motto, "All in Christ," since all our springs are in him ; "All by Christ," for it is through him that God communicates all his blessings ; and "All to Christ," for, bought as we are with a price, every talent and every moment ought to be sacred to him. Amen.

ADDRESS XLIX.

ROMANS viii. 34.

"Who also maketh intercession for us."

IN these words we behold the apostle triumphing in Christ. Who is there that does not envy his feelings ? Even those who inveigh most bitterly against the presumptuous assurance of the enthusiast, must respect Paul's holy confidence, and wish for his rapturous exultation. The grounds on which he rests his security from condemnation, are the strongest that can be ima-

gined,—what Christ did on earth, and what he does in heaven.

Had it been merely stated that Jesus was at the right hand of God, we might have been tempted to imagine that his condition there was one of indolent grandeur, and that he felt no longer that solicitude for our happiness which distinguished him so much upon earth. But when we are told that he ever lives to make intercession for us, we are assured that love, active and unwearied, characterises him in heaven. Highly exalted as he is, he forsakes not his place betwixt God and the sinner. A name is given him above every name ; but he still retains the title and the office of the Advocate with the Father, the Mediator between God and men.

Let your meditations, Christians, be now directed to the nature of your Lord's intercession, and to the blessings we derive from it.

The intercession of Christ consists in his appearing in the presence of God for us, and presenting the memorials of his sufferings in our behalf. The Jewish high priest went of old on the day of atonement into the most holy place, to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice before the mercy-seat. No human being was permitted to accompany him. The worshippers remained without ; but bells of gold were placed upon the hem of his robe round about, that their sound might announce to them the safety of the high priest, and the acceptance of the sacrifice. Your great High Priest, Christians, is not entered into the holy places made with hands, but into heaven itself. "He is gone there, not with the blood of goats or calves, but with his own blood." The fragrance of his sacrifice fills the land of glory ; and the merits of his cross are mingled with all the splendours of his throne. Not one pang which he suffered, and not one effort which he made for our salvation, can be forgotten. The traces of the blood of the Lamb are to be seen on every garment, and on every blessing there.

And the gospel which you hear is a joyful sound from the great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, announcing to you that his offering and sacrifice were to God of a sweet-smelling savour, and that because he lives, ye shall live also. Lift up your eyes, ye disciples of Jesus, to the world of glory ; see the blood sprinkled by his hands before the throne of grace ; behold your names shining on his breast-plate, and compassion for your infirmities swelling in his heart ; and listen to that voice, which, while the sorrows of Calvary rise in memorial before God, again proclaims, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." As his labours of love pass in review, they are felt pleading for his people's acceptance ; the tears which he shed claim consolation for mortals ; and that cross, at whose triumphant progress the nations of the earth shall bow, and the spirits of glory shall exult, hath ever power with God, and prevails.

The intercession of Christ consists also in his declaring it to be his will, that the blessings he has purchased should be bestowed on the objects of his mercy. He prays, "Lord, let it alone this year also," and the sentence of the barren fig-tree is suspended. He prays, "Father, forgive them," and the sins of the guilty are blotted out. He prays for the consolation of the good, and the Comforter descends to save the afflicted who lie low in grief. He prays for their protection, and the Almighty's hand is stretched down to shield the feeble and the defenceless. He prays for their sanctification, and the grace of God makes them perfect in every good word and work. He prays, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am," and the commandment is issued, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in." How extensive are the requests of Jesus ! No blessing, necessary for your happiness, can be omitted in his prayers ; nor can he offer a petition

which his Father's heart doth not welcome, and which his hand is not ready and quick to fulfil.

Christians, express to him at this solemn moment the gratitude which you owe to your Intercessor for the blessings which you have already obtained, and for those expectations of grace and glory which his sacrifice and advocacy warrant; and, with the feelings of affection and joy which become you, partake of the symbols of that death which is the ground of his pleadings, and of your hope.

The intercession of Christ consists in his answering all the accusations which Satan advances against his people. Satan is the accuser of the brethren, who accuses them before God day and night; but no charge can he urge against you, which your Advocate is not qualified to answer. Your imperfect services he is able to beautify, and there is expiation for your sins in his atoning blood. He is perfectly aware of all that Satan intends to advance. There are no unguarded moments with him, in which he may be taken by surprise. The subtilty of your accuser cannot perplex your Advocate, nor his audacity confound him, nor his pertinacity exhaust his patience. And can you listen to the temptations of your adversary? He who now tempts you to sin, with a voice so soft and flattering, is he who aggravates your faults in the court of heaven, and exhibits your conduct there in the most hideous colours. "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Has calumny assailed your good name? He who defends your cause in heaven, will not be unmindful of your reputation upon earth; and calls you, by well-doing, to put to silence the petulance of censure.

To the service of this Friend, thus generous and vigilant, you are now to devote yourselves; and should Satan stand at your right hand to accuse and to upbraid you, your Saviour will command him to silence, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

The intercession of Christ, consists in his presenting the services of his people to the Father. "I saw an angel stand at the altar, having a golden censer, and much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the throne." Your tears of penitence, your labours of faith and love, your songs of gratitude, your gifts of charity, and your vows of obedience, he lays before his Father, as purified by his gracious influence, and solicits for them his benignant acceptance. Your sorrows, and your claims, your vows and your songs at his table this day, I trust he hath already carried to his Father, and they have been an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to God.

Amidst the worship of angels, and apostles and martyrs, he disdains not to present the sighs of the prisoner, whose afflictions have led him to seek consolation in heaven; the prayers of the child, whose mind is opening to devotion; and the ejaculations of the dying, expressive of their earnest wish for mercy.

And shall not this excite you to greater zeal in the services of religion, and render you more solicitous to frame them aright? Say not, since my Saviour's merits are infinite, it is of little consequence what imperfections adhere to my services. And can a disciple of Jesus thus turn the grace of his Lord into an argument for indolence and folly? He requires you to be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. The sacrifices which he presents are those of the persons who "have done what they could," whose aim it is to go on to perfection; yet who, amidst all their obedience, feel that they are unprofitable servants, and abhor every hope for eternity, but that of salvation through grace.

Meditate on the excellencies of your Lord's intercession. It is most earnest and affectionate. Many who

solicit urgently favours for themselves, are cold and careless in their pleadings in behalf of others. It is only where the heart is interested, and where benevolent and generous feelings operate powerfully, that we can expect that a man will make the cause of another his own, and plead it as warmly as if it was. Jesus has the spirit of charity in its highest perfection, and the strongest interest in our welfare. His prayers are the prayers of the heart. Love stirs up wisdom to select its best arguments, and stimulates zeal to urge its strongest plea. That love which reigned in the sorrows of death, shines in the eloquence of heaven. His people, for whom he pleads, often ask his blessing in a careless manner, but their Advocate solicits for them with his whole heart.

The intercession of your Lord is constant. The most benevolent of human beings have seasons of languor, in which the efforts of generosity seem a burden ; and the attention required by their own interests, withdraws their minds, on many occasions, from the affairs of others. But Jesus can listen at the same moment to the praises of the happy, and to the cries of the wretched ; bestow blessings while he solicits them ; and stretch forth the sceptre of mercy to the suppliant, while he presents his golden censer at the altar. How perilous would your state be, if Jesus were to intermit his intercession in your behalf ! The blessings for which you felt the greatest need, might be denied you ; and the prayer might be shut out, on the answer of which your comfort seemed to depend. But Jesus maintains his intercession with unabated energy. Your best Friend can never cease to care for your souls. From his lips your names are never taken ; and from his hands the censer never drops. As long as you traverse this wilderness, your Saviour on high will plead for your guidance and your safety ; and, "Be this happiness eternal," shall be the language of his merits when you have entered into his joy.

Let not the feeble and timid saint imagine, that the intercession of Christ extends not to him. No weak-

ness of grace, and no obscurity of station in any of his people, can make him disdain to plead for them. Nor can the number of your wants, nor the extremity of your sorrows, make him shrink from interesting himself in your behalf. With infinite merit to plead, and with love in his heart far surpassing our conceptions in its tenderness and strength, it cannot be thought that his intercession is narrow and partial. Multiplicity of objects bewilder the thoughts of men; and that sympathy which is demanded for a number of sufferers, is neither so tender nor so active as that which is excited by the side of a single mourner in the dust. This arises from the limited nature of the human faculties. But your great Intercessor is rich in mercy. The cares of millions are no burden to him; and, amidst the claims of thousands of thousands, each has its due share of attention from the understanding and the love which are infinite.

Never entertain a doubt of the prevalence of your Lord's intercession. We often see here the most melting intreaties prove unavailing. Often has eloquence pleaded in vain, in behalf of oppressed innocence. No mandate goes forth to break their chains, or to restore their possessions. How often have the tears of nature pleaded in vain the cause of those whom the heart was eager to save from destruction! But the pleadings of Jesus are never unsuccessful. The justice and the mercy of the supreme Judge second all his claims; and the salvation of those for whom he pleads, is as dear to the Father's heart as it can be to his own. Him the Father heareth always.

Christians, does the Redeemer thus plead your cause in heaven, and shall not you plead for him upon earth? His cause is the cause of truth and goodness. Plead it with the earnestness of affection, with the constancy of principle, with the wisdom which selects the fittest times and places for its efforts, and with that sanctity of demeanour which presumption itself will hesitate to oppose. "O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul,"

and I will declare thy doings among the people, and bless thy name for ever and ever.

In fine, pray without ceasing. Your gracious Intercessor in heaven hath promised you his Holy Spirit to make intercession in you, to teach you what to ask, and in what manner to solicit his blessings. Ye young disciples, prayer will be an excellent monitor against those levities and indiscretions by which many, in early life, have made both themselves and their profession the object of contempt. Will the voice of temptation be listened to by him who hears it as he comes from or goes to the throne of grace? Aged saints, prayer will gladden your solitude by intercourse with God and heaven. I call you, who have been enjoying communion with God, to prayer, for it will dispose you to walk humbly with him; and you, who are mourning his absence, I exhort to pour out your hearts before the Lord. Prayer will calm your impatience, and animate your hope. Continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Amen.

ADDRESS L.

1 COR. xi. 26.

“As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death until he come.”

WHAT an interesting view of the ordinance of the Lord’s supper is this! Your ideas of this ordinance are, I trust, pure and enlightened; yet it may be good for you to be reminded of the design of this service, and of the spirit which it ought to indicate.

In eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, we shew the manner of our Lord's death. The breaking of the bread represents the sufferings of his body ; and the pouring out of the wine, the shedding of his blood. And while we contemplate these, shall not penitential sorrow rend our hearts ? Shall not we pour out our hearts before him, in the language of devotional feeling ? If, in viewing the mangled body and the agonizing soul of the Redeemer, repentance gives no pang, and drops no tear ; if gratitude and love make not the heart to burn, we must forfeit all claim to the graces of Christians, and to the feelings of men.

In eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup, we profess our interest in the blessings of Christ's death. " The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ? " If we view this rite in reference to the world around us, in observing it, we thus address them : You may exclude us from many of your boasted scenes of enjoyment ; but we have meat to eat which ye know not of, and joys with which you cannot intermeddle. You affect to pity us for the delusions that beguile us, and for the sacrifices we must make ; but we think on you with strong compassion, and call on you to " taste and see that God is good, and that they who trust in him are blessed." If we view this rite in reference to Satan, it tells him that we dread not his malice nor his charges ; for " It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died." If we view it in reference to the Lord of heaven, its language is this : " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places."

In eating of this bread, and in drinking of this cup, we shew our affectionate remembrance of Christ's death. A departed friend has claims on our remembrance, in proportion to the excellencies of his character, and to the

services which he has done us. Such a friend is often present to our thoughts ; but when the day returns, on which he bestowed upon us some signal marks of his affection, or in which he subjected himself for our sake to danger or suffering ; when we approach the place in which we received his parting blessing, or at which we followed him to his long home, the heart impels us at such a season to go to his grave to weep there ; and we bless his memory with the encomiums of gratitude and love. And shall we be thus just to earthly friends, and forget our best Friend ? Shall excellencies which are unparalleled, love passing knowledge, and sufferings which rescue from the lowest hell, be forgotten ? “ This do in remembrance of me,” is the Saviour’s injunction ; and what is the language of our obedience to it ? Men around me forget thee days without number ; on thee, multitudes never bestow one grateful or admiring thought : to condemn their insensibility, and to shew that in my memory and heart thou reignest, I take the cup of salvation, and call on thy name. O ye who boast of the strength of your feelings, who would count it the most painful reproach which could be cast on you, that you had forgotten a valuable friend, and who press every relic of him to your hearts, why is the cross of Jesus so seldom in your thoughts ? Why do ye turn away your feet from his table ? How defective is that sensibility which melts the heart at the remembrance of human excellence, but which is never roused to magnify the Saviour !

In eating this bread, and drinking of this cup, we shew, that, instead of participating in the contempt with which others regard the death of Christ, we glory in his cross. The crucifixion of Christ was that part of the gospel which was peculiarly the object of ridicule and opposition in the primitive times. To trust for salvation in one who had been crucified through weakness ; to glory in the Founder of their faith, as dying in a mode which the universal consent of mankind had stamped

with infamy ; and to proclaim a suffering criminal as the most illustrious of characters,—seemed to the carnal and perverted mind the height of madness. In opposition to such ideas, and to the insults which they dictated, Christians were, by the observance of this ordinance, to shew that they saw every thing in the cross which could call forth triumphant exultation. The cross of Christ, from the redemption which it accomplished, and from the virtues which it displayed, is the noblest object which the mind can contemplate. Is it thus, O Christians, that you regard it ? In thy cross, O Jesus, is my salvation and my glory ; the rock of my strength and my refuge is in thee !

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

In eating of this bread, and in drinking of this cup, you have been acknowledging the obligations which his death lays upon you to serve him. You have been giving a solemn pledge, in the face of heaven and earth, that you will labour to promote the great moral purposes of his sufferings. You have declared, that you will crucify the flesh, with its affections and lusts ; that you will never listen to the temptations which may solicit you to abandon the Saviour ; that on your heads, the guilt of apostacy shall never be charged ; and that to deny yourselves, to take up your cross and to follow him, is the purpose of your hearts, and shall be the business of your lives. Were this moral view of commemorating the death of Christ as much regarded by us as it ought, the enemies of the gospel would not find, in the sinful actions of its friends, those pretexts which they so eagerly seize, for “blaspheming the name by which we are called.” When men who have gone to the Lord’s table, are seen in a few days staggering through excess of wine, or when lips to which the cup of salvation has been lifted, are heard pouring forth the hateful tales of scandal,

the thoughtless contract prejudices against religion, which neither the reasonings of the wise, nor the virtues of the good, can destroy. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Was Christ a man of sorrows, and shall we live in pleasure? Was he a pattern of patience and gentleness, in agonies the most overpowering to nature, and shall we yield ourselves to peevishness and despondence, under temptations common to man? Did Jesus endure the cross, and shall we claim the sluggard's ease?

We exhort you to embrace every opportunity which God presents to you, of encompassing his altar. You have heard of the zeal of your fathers in the observance of this ordinance; and how they left their home and their business, to go to distant places for the food of their souls. Christian hospitality opened its gates to receive them; and religious conversation inspired, in the path in which they travelled, and in the places where they made their abode, the light and the fervour of the temple. And shall we, whose opportunities are more frequent, and whose dwellings are placed almost at Zion's gates, suffer any trivial inconvenience to detain us from the solemnities of the gospel? Never let your language or your conduct suggest the idea to others, that the commemoration of Christ's death is with you a secondary object, to be postponed till curiosity is gratified by a succession of sermons; and to which your attention can only be obtained, where preachers new and admired officiate.

There are some who once observed this ordinance, but now treat it with neglect. They have fallen into vicious indulgences, and they imagine that the world will censure them less severely, from their mingling no longer with the saints in their solemn feasts. How pernicious is their example, and how perilous is their state! "It had been better for them not to have known the

holy commandment." "We exhort you to continue stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

Let us rejoice in the perpetuity of this ordinance, for in it Christ's death shall be commemorated till he come. The fashion of this world passeth away. Customs, which were once general in many countries, have gone into disuse, and are known only to the curious enquirer; many of the practices of our forefathers are sinking fast into oblivion, and will soon be universally forgotten: But Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; and one generation shall praise his works to another, and shew his mighty deeds.

The event which this ordinance exhibits, is one which deserves continual celebration. It is one in which every generation has the same interest. Many of the events which are commemorated by men, are seen by a succeeding age in a very different light; and what their forefathers hallowed, bewailed, or exulted in, they may despise as unimportant: But Christ crucified is, in every age, the wisdom of God, and the power of God.

Apostates may renounce their profession; innovators may attempt to set this ordinance aside, and to introduce in its place something better adapted to their fleshly minds; persecution may turn her sword every way to prevent access to Zion's gates, and to the bread which satisfies her poor; yet Christ's name shall be remembered in all generations.

The memory of the destroyers of their species shall rot, in spite of all the efforts that are made to embalm it. The stately monument, which lifts up its head in all the pomp and beauty of sculpture, shall mingle with the dust it covers. The dwelling-place which was to continue to all generations, the trophy of the wealth and the splendour of families, gives its name and its honours to others. But "a seed shall serve the Redeemer, and shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come, and declare his righteousness to

a people that shall be born." He who can of the stones raise up children to Abraham ; he who could in the desert give bread from heaven, and water from the rock ; he who displayed on a solitary mountain the brightness of his glory,—can never want a seed to serve him, a place to record his name, and symbols to exhibit his blessings.

Christians, you must soon dwell in silence ; but the living, the living shall praise the Redeemer ; and the father to the children shall make known his love. Your mouldering dust shall have no part in this, or in any transaction that takes place under the sun ; yet with Jesus it will still retain its connection, and in him it will sleep. I shall go to the generation of my fathers ; but I will go, saying, Because Christ died, to me to die is gain ; and because he lives, I shall live also.

The second coming of Christ, by introducing a perfect state of worship and of enjoyment, shall supersede institutions at present existing. This ordinance shall then cease. When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When the Lamb is beheld in the midst of the throne as it had been slain, there can be no need of these symbols.

Then, O Christian, you shall shew forth the death of Christ in anthems glowing with rapturous devotion, and graced with the sweetest melody ; and angels, who were but the spectators of your commemorations of it on earth, shall join with you in celebrating the Lamb that was slain ; the joy, the glory, and the head of both.

ADDRESS LI.

EPHESIANS iii. 18, 19.

“ That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge.”

THIS prayer of Paul for the Ephesians, is distinguished by uncommon loftiness and energy. Behold how it swells beyond the feeble, narrow, grovelling conceptions of mortals! That love of the Redeemer, which shone on all his sermons, and which was of all subjects of contemplation the most delightful to him, he wishes unfolded to these disciples in its wonders, and enjoyed by them in its blessings. Such, Christians, are our wishes in your behalf.

On these excellencies of the love of Christ, let your hearts now meditate. You have looked to human friendship, and predicted the diminution of its enjoyments, and its utter extinction. Come and contemplate a love, whose power to bless heaven only can shew, and which, through eternity, will continually open new wonders to you.

Think on the depth of Christ's love. It reaches to men in the lowest sphere of life, to the poor in the dust, and to the needy on the dunghill. Wealth and grandeur cannot purchase its smiles, and indigence and rags impede not the bestowal of its blessings. “ I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinks on me.” He exercises over me and over mine the care of a Father, and treats me with all the kindness of the most indulgent friendship.

But is this the utmost that can be said of the depth

of his love? No; it reaches to its objects in the lowest abyss of guilt and pollution. As low as divine vengeance threatened to plunge the sinner, thus low did the grace of the Saviour reach. When you see the sinner wallowing in the mire of corruption; when you think of the damned sunk in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and reflect from what he hath saved you, you must see reason to exclaim, O the depth of his love! How astonishing is the depth of that love, which brought him from the throne of glory to the manger at Bethlehem; from reclining on the bosom of his Father, to agonize in anguish and in blood upon the ground in the garden; and from reigning in life, to the sleep of death in the tomb of Joseph! How vast the depth of that love, which led him to such scenes of horror for us, as made him exclaim, "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deeps: thy wrath lies hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves!"

Meditate on the height of his love. Think of the height of privilege to which it raises its objects. Who can estimate fully the value of such blessings as these, union to his person, the best robe, the light of life, the crown of glory, and the prize of the high calling of God? Who can describe the height of excellence to which it raises its objects? It calls to glory and virtue. It advances to a participation of a divine nature. It makes us holy as God is holy, merciful as he is merciful, and perfect as he is perfect. So high is his love, that it will raise every object of it to sit where he sits, and to walk where he walks. Have you seen the dying Christian soaring in faith and hope above all that is mortal, and longing for the period when he shall actually depart and be with Christ? It is the love of Christ which gives him this elevation, and it is he who says to him, Arise and come away.

Meditate on the breadth of his love, how it reaches to men of all classes, and of every land. It reaches to

the isles afar off, and shall make them wait for his law ; to the burning desert, and shall open up rivers of water in a dry place, and yield the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. It extends to the regions of perpetual winter ; and amidst the most piercing cold, shall make the heart to burn. It will gather its elect from the four winds, and in it shall all the families of the earth be blessed. How astonishing is that love, which has reached from the scholar in his chamber to the savage in his cave ; which gives prosperity to the city, and beauty to the wilderness ; peace in the temple, and hope in the churchyard ! Bigotry hath attempted to prescribe limits to the Saviour's love, and has imagined that beyond the pale which she had set up it would on no account go ; but the charity of the gospel spurns her gloomy restrictions, exposes the malignity and pride which judge so unworthily of the Redeemer's heart, and hails its objects among every people, and its language in every tongue.

Meditate on the length of his love. It reaches from age to age, and from everlasting to everlasting. You have sighed over the inconstancy of human friendship ; you have wept at the grave where the love of the kindest heart has perished ; but I call on you to behold a love subject to no fluctuation, and which is eternal as the Being in whom it dwells. "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God !" With such thoughts of his love, pour out your hearts before Him.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Take comfort, ye friends of Jesus, from these views of your Saviour's love. Take comfort from its depth. "He will subdue your iniquities ; he will cast your sins into the depths of the sea." Depth shall not separate you from his love. In poverty, it will make you rich in faith ; in reproach, it will whisper, "since

thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable ;” in despondency, it will lift you up to joy unspeakable and full of glory ; in oppression, it will deliver you from the foot of cruel pride ; and when you are laid low in the grave, your dust shall be its care. Its resurrection in glory is its purpose now, and shall be its triumph hereafter. “Thou, Lord, who hast shewn me great and sore adversities, shalt quicken me, and bring me again from the depths of the earth. Thou wilt increase my greatness, and comfort me against grief on every side.”

Rejoice in the height of his love. Height shall not separate you from his love, by the temptations which prosperity presents. The love of Jesus will guard and sweeten your enjoyments, for it is the most delicious ingredient in the cup of prosperity ; and it will lead you to that wise and generous use of the world, which will bless others, and yield a return of happiness to your own bosom.

This excellence of his love confirms the hope, “They shall come and sing in the heights of Sion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord ; and their souls shall be as a watered garden, and they shall not sorrow any more at all.”

Rejoice in the breadth of his love. It reaches to all your dangers for your protection, and to all your trials for your comfort ; to all your wants for their supply, and to all your duties for your aid ; to all your interests for their advancement, and to all your connections to bless them for your sake ; to all your purposes for his honour to accept of them, and to all your fears to dissipate them, by the kindest assurances that it shall be well with you. Ye are not straitened in him ; for “He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think.”

Rejoice in the length of his love. You sometimes are afraid that your friends will grow weary of you, that your hold of the hearts of those around you is

slight, and that you may soon be cast away from their regard ; but Jesus hath said, "I will not, I will not leave thee ; I will never, never forsake thee." There is nought that can tempt you to question his love, to which the grand scene you have now been contemplating does not furnish you with an answer. When the removal of blessings highly valued leads you to suspect the alienation of his heart from you, remember that he gave himself for you. When sharp affliction suggests the fear that his mercy is clean gone, recollect that he bore your griefs, and carried your sorrows ; and when the arduous struggles to which you are called induce you to think, if my Redeemer cared for me he would not try me thus, remember that for you he went through fire and blood.

But these excellencies of Christ's love hold out to you lessons of duty. Be willing to be abased as low as Jesus judges fit for his sake. Check every rising of pride, and seek not to retain what he commands you to relinquish. Let your respect and your kindness follow the saints into the most depressed circumstances. Shall your love refuse to sink so low as your Lord's has gone ?

Envy not the superior prosperity of others. Is your eye evil, because the heart of Jesus is kind ? In the variety of his distributions he displays his wisdom ; and if he has given more to others than to you, it is to teach them gratitude, and you contentment.

"Let the high praises of God be in your mouths."
"Set your affections on things above, and not on things that are on the earth."

Let the breadth of the Saviour's love teach you to cultivate extensive benevolence. Be not like the selfish, who feel only for themselves, and who live only for themselves. To your pity, to your prayers, and to your efforts to do good, let neither prejudice, nor party spirit, nor a sordid temper, set limits.

Be not weary in well-doing, and never let your love wax cold. The nearer to death, to heaven, and to

Jesus you are, you ought to exhibit more spirituality of mind, and more ardour in goodness. Shew that the benevolence of the gospel hath power to conquer all the tendencies of age to peevish complaint and to grasping avarice.

Anticipate the views which heaven will give you of these dimensions of the Saviour's love. What views will not the spirits of the just take of its depth, when they see the gulf of destruction raging far beneath ; of its height, when with their Lord they sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high ; and of its breadth, when they behold the nations of them that are saved walking in the light of the Lamb ? " The stretching out of thy wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel." And how will its length astonish them, as ages roll away in the enjoyment of its fruits, without one symptom or one fear of its termination ! " Now, may our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, who hath loved you, and hath given you everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

ADDRESS LII.

PHILIPPIANS ii. 9.

" Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him."

THERE are few who do not profess that they feel pleasure in the elevation and happiness of a man of true excellence, whom they have seen labouring under poverty and scorn. What man, that has a heart in the

least degree disposed to sensibility, can read without lively interest the history of the promotion and glory of Joseph ! but this pleasure is much heightened by the recollection of the pit into which he was cast, the slavery into which he was sold, and the prison which he preferred to the sacrifice of virtue. How delightful, then, must be the contemplation of Christ's exaltation ! It must be peculiarly so to you, Christians, whose eyes are now fixed on that wondrous humiliation to which his love to you led him so cheerfully to submit.

Behold him making himself of no reputation for our sakes, and as the reward of this, obtaining a name that is above every name. Behold him taking on himself the form and the task of a servant ; and as the reward of this, every knee bows to him, and every tongue confesses his glory. Contemplate him highly exalted, who humbled himself, and a reign in life given to him who became obedient to the death, even the death of the cross. See him who was found in fashion as a man, and made in the likeness of sinful flesh, " glorified with the Father, with that glory which he had with him before the world was." He on whose cross the inscription, " Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," awakened in those that read it indignation or scorn, is now exalted to be a Prince. He who had this insulting scoff thrown in his teeth, " He saved others, himself he cannot save," is now exalted to be a Saviour. Behold him, the shedding of whose blood filled up the measure of his murderers' crimes, and exposed them to utter destruction, elevated to give repentance and remission of sins.

Rejoice, Christians, that your Lord is thus exalted. There are many things which mar men's complacency in the elevation of their fellow creatures, which can have no influence here ; such as the steps by which they rose to it. Who can look with complacency on a palace built with blood, or a throne established by iniquity ? Who can see with pleasure a sceptre in the

hand of the murderer of his species, or a crown upon the head of the man of violence? But in the exaltation of the Lord Jesus, we see excellence triumphant, mercy rejoicing over judgment, and grace reigning to eternal life.

The miseries arising from the advancement of the wicked, are a strong reason why men should not rejoice in it. "The wicked walk on every side, when the vilest of men are exalted." When the hopes, the innocence, and the peace of families are ruined; when a country is made a land of sorrow and desolation,—who can rejoice in the exaltation of such oppressors? What heart doth not wish, Oh that they were brought low! Around their thrones venal praise may chant her songs, and terror may express a feigned complacency in their triumphs, but there no tribute of the heart is ever paid. But Christ is exalted to dispense happiness and salvation to the ends of the earth, and to repair the desolations of many generations. The blessings which he bestows call forth the thanksgivings of gratitude, and the promises of his grace inspire the sweetest pleasures of hope. He reigns in the heart.

Many feel no complacency in the elevation of others, in which they have no share. When they survey "the house of their precious things, their silver and their gold, their servants and their chariots, their ointments and their spices," all this availeth me nothing, is their language. But in the exaltation of Jesus we have an interest; "For God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved you, hath quickened you together with Christ, and raised you up, and made you sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus." He hath taken possession of heaven as the forerunner of his people; and to whatever honour and felicity the Mediator is raised, his first care is to establish your claim to share it. You have come to his table to glory in Christ's cross and crown; and from his cross, and from his throne, he speaks and bestows salvation.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God.” There is nothing in heaven which appears at all desirable to a wicked man, but as it is a state of exemption from pain and misery, or a state of splendour and glory. But Christ in heaven is its beauty and glory, its charm, its bliss, and its security. What would the throne be, if the Lamb were not in the midst of it as it had been slain? What would the paradise of God be, if the tree of life was not in it? What would the fountains of living waters be, if the Lamb did not lead us to them? What would the society of heaven be, if he were absent, to whom every ear delights to listen, and whom every eye follows wherever he goes?

“Whom have I in heaven but thee?” Just men made perfect, angels shining in glory, thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, ye are not my saviours, ye are not my heaven. Jesus is my life and my joy, my glory, and my all. Christ knows that such are the feelings of his people; and therefore, when he promises them heaven, he assures them of the enjoyment of his presence, nay, of a share of his throne. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and am seated with my Father on his throne.”

Christians, if the humiliation of your Lord is thus rewarded, you may rest assured that you shall not be losers by what you suffer for his name. Should you be branded with the vilest epithets, and reproached as hypocrites and blasphemers, fanatics and bigots, for Christ's sake, he will write upon you his new name. You may, perhaps, be driven from the ordinances which you love, but he “will make you pillars in the temple of God, and ye shall go no more out.” Should cruel mockery

array you in filthy rags, he will clothe you in white raiment. Should oppression spoil you of your goods, you may exult that your treasure is in heaven. The terrors of the dungeon have, to the sufferer, added new charms to his Father's house, and the dishonours of men heightened the raptures inspired by the approbation of heaven. The master who supports the resolution and the fidelity of his servants, shall amply reward it.

“Make mention that Christ's name is exalted.” “I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations.” When we extol men, our praises may be excessive. Friendship in its enthusiasm, and admiration in its ecstasies, often represent excellencies in brighter language than they deserve, and as existing in a more perfect form than they actually do. But Christ's glorious name is exalted above all blessing and praise. Often has it happened, that men have seen reason to regret the extravagance of their encomiums, when disgusting defects appear in characters which they considered as all fair; but the more we know Jesus Christ, the more reason shall we see to blush that our conceptions were so grovelling, our song so feeble, and our spirits so cold. Christ's name is majestic, yet it is most sweet. It is as ointment poured forth. Christ's fame is the sweetest music which can reach a holy ear; a saint listens to it with pleasure now, and he will listen to it through eternity with increasing rapture. “Unto you, therefore, that believe, he is precious;” he is an honour. He sheds lustre on all that belongs to him, makes the obscurest saint more honourable than his brethren, and the man whom the world despises, a crown of glory in the hand of his God. “Now, may the God of all grace, who hath called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you.”

ADDRESS LIII.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 10.

“ That I may know the power of his resurrection.”

FAR different from this were once the wishes of Paul's heart. His privileges as a Jew, and his righteousness as a Pharisee, were once the things in which he gloried ; and to advance in the learning of his country, and to extirpate the Christian faith, were the great objects of his pursuit. Now, his grand desire is to win Christ, to be conformable to his death, and to know the power of his resurrection. The eye which he had raised with such veneration to the chair of Moses, he now lifted to the cross of Christ ; and, instead of learning wisdom at the feet of Gamaliel, he sought it at the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth.

But did not the apostle know the power of Christ's resurrection long before he expressed this wish ? Does not he say, “ Last of all, he was seen by me also, as of one born out of due time ? ” There shone a light from on high, above the brightness of the sun at mid-day, which made him fall to the earth ; and there came a voice from heaven, “ I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest ! ” which vanquished the unbelief and the enmity of his heart, and made him cry out, “ Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ? ” But the apostle wished to feel the power of Christ's resurrection in a stronger degree ; and I trust it is with this wish that you have come to the table of Jesus.

But what is it to know the power of Christ's resurrection ? It is to feel its influence in rescuing us from the thralldom of that body of death under which Paul

groaned, and deliverance from which he expected by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ his Lord. Ye disciples of Jesus, do the suggestions of unbelief and of pride, of envy and of worldly-mindedness, distress you? And is it your earnest wish, that the power of your living Lord may subdue these? He can make these archers, that shoot at you, and sorely grieve you, to quake, and to become as dead men, like the Roman guard that watched his tomb.

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence quickening us to newness of life. It was Paul's aim to press on to perfection in goodness; and he wished to feel the power of his Lord's resurrection giving constancy and vigour to his efforts. Is it your language, O that I may live no longer to the dictates of corruption, but to the will of God! yet I am feeble and irresolute. Look to the place where the Lord lay; from thence comes your help. Can you see Jesus coming from the tomb, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and be weary and faint in your minds? Can you see him rising for our justification, and catch no zeal in good works, and no energy in virtuous exertion from the view?

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence animating us to a bold adherence to his cause. Its influence in this way is indeed most wonderful. It made Peter, who gave so melancholy a proof of human weakness, the boldest of confessors; and it was this that kept Paul stedfast to his Master, though "in deaths oft." We cling not to a master who lives no longer to witness or to reward the exertions of his followers; but we have a great High Priest, who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God; and shall we not hold fast our profession? Did the Saviour rise, determined to support the cause in which he died? and shall we fall from our own stedfastness? or be ashamed of Him who is entered into his glory? "As

the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee."

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence in raising the heart from earth to heaven. Few have been so distinguished for heavenly-mindedness as Paul. He had been caught up to the third heavens, and he could not forget what he had seen and heard there. Yet there were seasons in which his soul cleaved to the dust; and in which he felt peculiar need of divine influence to withdraw his heart from earthly things; and this influence he sought from that Spirit, who had loosed from the Saviour the bands of death. Those that mind earthly things are the enemies of the cross of Christ, and hostile to its grand design, but we trust that your conversation is in heaven; and "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." This earth is a valley full of bones; but the land afar off is the land of the living, and to it your souls are now aspiring. Your heart and your flesh are crying out for the living God; and your Father now gives you the bread and the water of life from heaven, to strengthen every pious feeling, and to stimulate you in the pursuit of glory and immortality. Over these symbols of your connection with Christ, renounce for ever the friendship of the world, and anticipate the time when you shall eat bread in the kingdom of God, and drink wine new with him in his Father's house.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

When our Lord shewed himself the third time to his disciples after his resurrection, he said to them, "Children, have ye any thing to eat?" And when they answered, No, he directed them to cast the net on the right side of the ship, and they should find; and when the immense draught of fishes was brought

ashore, some of them were laid upon the fire ; and bread being provided by his care, he said, " Come and dine ;" and he took bread and gave them, and fish likewise. The presence of their risen Lord made that meal the happiest of which they had ever partaken. But he gives you his own flesh to eat, and " he that eateth me shall live by me."

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence in supporting us under sufferings. That power which raised Christ from the grave, delivered Paul from prisons and from judgment. It released his feet from the stocks at Philippi, and rescued him from the mouth of the lion at Rome. The God of peace, that brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the everlasting covenant, shall take you from the furnace of affliction, and enable you, while you are in it, to suffer like Christians. While hypocrites are discovered in their true characters by affliction, as the shattered condition of the wall is seen when the green ivy is torn away ; while their humility appears to have been only a show, and their faith to be dead, ye shall be found approved unto God, and the trial of your graces shall issue in everlasting glory.

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence alleviating the distress which arises from the departure of the pious and the good. To see the firm friends of the cause of Christ perishing by the hand of violence, was an affliction to which the Apostle knew he would be subjected : but he was persuaded that, while the Master lived, the cause could not sink. Can the gates of hell and death prevail, when he has the keys of both in his hand ? He who rose from the grave, and gathered followers to his standard, like the drops of dew from the womb of the morning, can raise up successors to fill every place which is left vacant in his church. You may be called to part with friends, whose counsel and example are a light to your paths, and

whose smiles of affection constitute one of the charms of life. Nature is weak, and you may be afraid that you will faint under the shock. But the power of Christ's resurrection will confirm the feeble knees, and strengthen the sweetest hopes of your heart. It assures you that the dominion of the grave lasts but for a season ; and that the threat which has so often given courage to the timid saint is not the language of vanity, " O death, I will be thy plague ; O grave, I will be thy destruction."

To know the power of Christ's resurrection, is to feel its influence raising the mind above the fears of death. The Apostle wished to feel such influence from it, that he might finish his course with joy. Death, O ye disciples of Jesus, is the last enemy with whom you have to struggle ; but the power of Christ's resurrection will make you say, " Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord." I fear not the bands of the grave, for they are broken ; nor the sting of death, for it is gone. " Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy," may well be the song of your last hour ; " though I fall, I shall arise ; though I lie in darkness, the Lord shall be light unto me." My heart and my flesh shall fail, but the power of thy resurrection, O Jesus, shall be the strength of my heart, and its blessings shall be my portion for ever.

Now, Christians, let this request, which you have presented at the communion table, be the prayer of every Sabbath. On that day, sacred to the memory of our Lord's resurrection, may you feel, as it returns, a new impulse to obedience, and a fresh spring of joy from its power. And when nature leads your steps from the temple to the graves of your friends beside it, amidst your melancholy musings, forget not the joy-inspiring shout, " The Lord is risen indeed !" And may you, every day that you live, feel the influence of Christ's resurrection, in the vigour of your graces, the conquest of your temptations, the cheerfulness of your hearts, and the ardour of your obedience.

ADDRESS LIV.

1 THESSALONIANS v. 10.

“ Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.”

SUCH is the argument by which the Apostle enforces the cultivation of the Christian graces, and the practice of strict sobriety. And what view can we take of the death of our Lord, more likely to move the heart, and influence the conduct, than this?

Christ died for us. To point out the agency of others in our Lord's sufferings, he is said to be put to death ; but to shew how cheerfully he submitted to them for our sakes, it is said that he died. The Father delivered him up, but he surrendered himself. When his enemies came out to seize him, he said, “ I am he whom ye seek ;” and, without the smallest attempt at resistance, he committed himself to their hands. “ The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all,” but he bowed his back to receive that burden. On his head the Father discharged the tempest of wrath ; but he bared it for the fury of the storm, and kept it erect and exposed to it, till he could say “ It is finished,” and then he bowed it and gave up the ghost.

When Providence calls us to suffer, we often discover the greatest reluctance. Nature shrinks ; the hand is raised as if to avert the blow, and the voice cries, O spare me ! Many who submit to sufferings at first with courage, find their spirits failing under protracted agony, and are heard exclaiming, “ Remove thy stroke away from me, I am consumed by the blow of thine hand :” but the Redeemer endured to the end.

But for what object was this death endured? It was that you might live with him. Sometimes we are said to die with Christ. This is a figurative expression, and points out our interest in his death. We cannot drink of the cup of which he drank; but the expression, *live with him*, shall be realized in its plainest and utmost extent of meaning.

Christians, you live with Christ, in some measure, even in this world. He died that your dead souls might be quickened by his Spirit; that those principles might be formed within you, without which there could be no intercourse betwixt heaven and you, and to procure for you the most delightful fellowship with himself. In the faith which sees him that is invisible; in the love which elevates the heart to God; and in the hope that enters within the veil, you live with him; and his word and his Spirit, his comforts and his laws, his secret and his work, are with you. The expression, *living with him*, intimates the familiarity and the continuance of your intercourse with him. You are like children under a father's roof, enjoying the kindest attentions of parental care. These never will weaken your reverence for your Lord. John, lying on Christ's breast, and asking him in a whisper, who would betray him, says, "Lord, who is it?" With the claims of affection, as well as with the sighing of penitence, godly fear mingles its language and its emotions.

By various events you may be separated from those with whom you have lived, and this must take place in death. Few there are of whom it can be said, as of Saul and Jonathan, "They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided." One grave may contain those who have lived in one dwelling; but commonly when they are reunited, the corpse is laid among the bones and the dust of what was once excellent in beauty and strength. But there is nought that can separate you from the love of Christ. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that

I will not turn away from them to do them good ; and I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not turn away from me."

To nourish his life in you, this table is spread. To confirm your faith in its immortal duration, to give you the pledges of his presence and favour, and to cherish in you that grateful sense of the Redeemer's dying love, which excites to the cultivation of all that is excellent in character, he calls you to partake of the bread of memorial, and of the cup of blessing. And let your hearts listen to his gracious words, " I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me, shall never die."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Come from the four winds, O breath, and blow on these disciples, that spiritual life may display in their devotion its brightest energy.

Christians, your Lord died for you, that while you sleep in the grave you might live with him. " While the dust returns to the earth as it was, the spirit returns to God that gave it." How delightful is the thought, that death is not the extinction of our being ! The eye of thy pious friend in the dust is now closed ; but the soul, whose movements of joy, or kindness, or hope made it sparkle, lives in happiness and love made perfect. The hand is cold, it cannot return thy pressure ; but the soul, whose strong attachment was evinced by the grasp, lives in the superior exercise of every kind affection. The tongue is silent, but the spirit, whose admiration and gratitude filled it with praise, serves God day and night in his temple. The body is sinking fast into a handful of dust, but the soul is rising from glory to glory. It kindles no longer at the contemplation of the material universe, or at the transactions of this earthly

scene ; but objects far more sublime call forth all its powers.

Ye have not so learned Christ as to imbibe the notion of the soul's sleep from death till the resurrection. This is a notion which degrades the soul of man, and extends the triumphs of the grave ; which deepens the gloom of the house of mourning, and stamps with folly the Christian's last prayer, " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It is not with clods of dust that the spirits of just men made perfect mingle, but with an innumerable company of angels, and with Jesus the Mediator of the covenant.

And when the resurrection comes, you shall live, ye friends of Christ, with him in body as well as in soul. Your vile bodies, fashioned like his, shall shine as his glorious body doth shine, shall abide where it dwells, and shall go where it goes. Our immortal spirits shall adore in profound humility, where the body kneels ; glow with the sublimest ecstasy, where it shouts for joy ; and whatever it grasps, to that they shall cleave in confidence and affection. " As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness ; and when I awake, I shall be satisfied with thy likeness." The body and the soul, though too often sources of misery and sin to each other, are yet unwilling to be separated ; but when reunited in heaven, there shall be no quality in either to embitter their connection, or to make its termination necessary.

The happiness of the believer derives its sweetness from its connection with Christ. It is not on sitting on a throne, or walking in white, or reigning in life, that his mind dwells ; but on sitting with Christ on his throne, walking with him in white, and reigning with him in life. Without Jesus, earth would seem a prison, nor could he be happy even in heaven.

How vast are your obligations to the Saviour ! We must be able to tell the happiness there is in heaven, and the duration there is in eternity, before we can understand fully the extent and value of our obligations

to the Lord Jesus, whose love to us was stronger than death.

Shew the influence of these views of the death of Christ, in producing growth in grace and sobriety of demeanour. With such a foundation for your faith and hope, let them advance in strength. With such motives to love your Redeemer, let your hearts burn with a more fervent affection; and let your moderation be known to all men. With the lofty hopes of religion before you, can you stoop to brutish folly, or to carnal indulgence? walk in the idle pomp of the vain, or wallow in the mire of intemperance? Destined to live with Christ for ever, shall you mingle with those who say, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die?"

The crown of glory is put on no head but on that which is found in the way of righteousness, tears are wiped from no eyes but those which are sacred to penitence and purity; and none shall be ever with the Lord, but those who are conformed to his image. Live not as the men of the world do, and go not ye after their ways, for their spirit is madness, their pursuits are folly, and their end is ruin. O "gather not my soul with sinners." "He that saith he abideth in Christ, ought himself also so to walk, even as he also walked." Thus may you walk, and with him you shall rest for ever.

ADDRESS IV.

HEBREWS iv. 15.

"We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

IN the descriptions of virtuous characters, written by many of the heathen moralists, there is a sternness

at which the heart revolts. Justice and fortitude were their favourite excellencies; and sensibility and compassion they despised as utterly inconsistent with energy of mind and dignity of character. They delighted to exhibit their heroes as rising superior to their own sufferings; and as viewing with contempt, rather than with indulgence and pity, the sorrows of others. How different is the character of our Lord! In him we behold courage, which a death of torture could not shake, mingled with the tenderest yearnings of mercy. The eye that never beheld vanity, was no stranger to the tear of pity; and that heart which sin never defiled, often sent forth the sigh of compassion.

Such was our Saviour's conduct while on earth. But is his heart susceptible of pity in heaven? Amidst the joys of his Father's presence, will he enter into the woes of the wretched? Listen, Christians, to this description given of his heart, by one who wrote it by inspiration from himself. O may the delightful evidences of his sympathy, send you away from his table rejoicing.

Your High Priest, Christians, knows all your sorrows. The obscurity of indigence veils many a scene of sorrow from human view, but to him all things are naked and open. "Thou tellest all my wanderings, thou puttest my tears into thy bottle." By him every groan is heard, and every pang is seen.

Your High Priest was, in all points, tried like as you are. He was subjected to temptations the most horrid, and to reproaches the most vile, to oppressive labours, and to deadly sorrow. How soothing is this thought to the afflicted heart! The burden that I am bearing was laid on Christ's shoulders, and his heart was wrung by the griefs which now torture mine. There is no scene of difficulty in the way to heaven, where we cannot behold the traces of our Lord's footsteps.

Your High Priest pities your sorrows. "He knows our frame, he remembers that we are but dust." Who

is he that most readily draws out his soul to the unhappy? It is the man who hath seen affliction by the rod of God's wrath. It is in the experience of sorrow, that some of our noblest institutions of charity have originated. Asylums for orphans, hospitals for the sick, and quiet habitations for the lunatic, have been reared by those who had known the griefs of an orphan's heart, the pangs of disease, and the horrors of a troubled mind. Jesus "suffered being tempted, that he might know how to succour them that are tempted." The melting heart, the soothing voice, and the kind supports of pity, are his. That sigh which you heard in your sorrow, came from the Saviour's bosom. That voice issued from his lips, which said, "I will not leave you comfortless;" and it was his hand that lifted you from the pit, which you thought would have been your grave.

Meditate, Christians, on the excellencies of your Lord's sympathy. It is most tender. In him there are no selfish principles to impede its emotions. Nature hath no sensibilities, friendship no meltings, and religion no charities so tender as the compassion of Christ. In your affliction, he is afflicted; in your oppressions, he is persecuted; in your reproaches, he is calumniated; in your sorrows, he is troubled; in your desertion, he is abandoned; and in your chains, he is bound. The mother that watches by the sick-bed of a child, and who says, as she witnesses the pang that shakes the feeble frame, Oh that I had suffered this in thy stead! enters not into its sorrows so fully as Christ does into your's. Remember, O Christian, the expression of his eye when he looked on affliction; the accents of his voice, when he spake to thee a word in season; and the manner in which he handled thy wounds and bound up thy sores, and acknowledge the tenderness of his pity.

The sympathy of our Lord, is exactly adapted to the claims of our sorrow. Men often complain, that they are not pitied by their friends to the degree that their

sorrows require. Selfish views and habits will make a man yield a great degree of sympathy to one species of sorrow, and scarce express any to another as worthy of pity. But Jesus knows the nature of every sorrow, and the rest which the weary and the heavy-laden require. Worldly circumstances often direct men in their sympathies. Many inquiries are made at the rich man's gate when he is sick, and many mourners go to condole with his friends when he is gone ; while the poor are neglected, as if the child of sorrow, perishing on his straw, was an object too mean for the notice of sympathy. But the afflicted's prayer, Jesus will never scorn ; and his ear is never turned away from the groans of the prisoner.

Before this Lord of compassions, I call on you to pour out your hearts, and to say, with the Jews, when they saw his tears of pity, " Behold how he loved us."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

The sympathy of your High Priest is effectual. Human pity can, in many cases, give no relief. The humane often see with sorrow the bands of wickedness, which they are not able to unloose ; the ravages of disease, which they cannot stay ; and the fury of despair, which they cannot assuage. But all power is given to your Lord in heaven and in earth, and he is able to save to the uttermost. He hath raised families in sorrow, to joy and health ; the victim of oppression he hath set in safety ; the frightful suggestions of the devil, which were urged on the heart, he hath silenced ; and the man who had thought his good name was irrecoverably gone, and that infamy, however undeserved, would make his death unpitied, and his grave accursed, has been restored by him to the confidence and respect of all around.

Rejoice, Christians, in the constancy of your Lord's sympathy. Human compassion is often short-lived.

There are various causes which contribute to blunt the feelings. The cares of the world engross the heart, and the neglect which men have experienced under their own sufferings, has chilled their sympathy with others. But the mercy of our Saviour endureth for ever. Mercy as well as goodness, ye saints of God, shall follow you all the days of your life. No suggestions of enemies can chill the heart of the Saviour; his ear they cannot close; and his hand they cannot turn away.

Now, Christians, let the sympathy of your Lord render him more dear than ever to your hearts. You have a more tender interest in his heart, than the angels that never sinned. The sons of God still shout for joy, and their happiness is pleasing to Jesus, who confirmed them in it; but to make them happy, he neither toiled nor bled. The miseries of the fallen angels never excited his pity; they tremble, but he gives them no quietness; and they are reserved unto judgment, but hope never lightens their chains. How different has been his conduct to you! See that you love him with a pure heart fervently.

Never distrust his sympathy. Say not, whatever be your sorrows, "Thou art become cruel to me; with thy strong hand thou opposest me." Who questions the benignant influence of the sun, because he permits clouds to darken the sky, and the rain and the snow to descend? The rain and the snow contribute to fertilize the earth, and thus work, in conjunction with him, in making it yield its increase. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that hope in his mercy." Never let mercy claim your confidence in vain.

I exhort you to fear the Lord, and his goodness. How often is the compassion of Christ asked by men for themselves or others, without any proper idea of its worth! Lord pity me, is often the language of unmeaning surprise; Lord pity him, is often the language of selfish indifference, when it shuts up its bowels of compassion. Solicit ye his mercy in holy reverence

and deep contrition. The majesty of Christ is not lost amidst the charms of his benignity, or the meltings of his compassion.

In fine, cultivate sympathy with each other. The views you have taken of his character, and of each other as brethren at the communion table, call you to the spirit and the offices of compassion and kindness. Are you in prosperous circumstances? Sympathy with the unhappy will bless and sanctify them. How comfortable will not your dwellings seem, after ministering to poverty and sickness in their dark abode! How sweet will be the smiles of your family, after gladdening the hearts of the widow and the fatherless! If you are in adversity, sympathy with the miseries of others will lighten your sorrows. Remember that there are in the world miseries more agonizing, and nights more wearisome than yours. Let none say, my sympathy will not avail the afflicted, for the time will come, when you will know by experience the value of a consoling word, and a pitying tear. The voice of sympathy has calmed many an agitated bosom, and its tears have refreshed many a withered heart. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." "Have compassion one of another; be pitiful."

ADDRESS LVI.

HEBREWS vi. 17, 18.

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

In the hour of separation from his friend David, Jonathan made him swear to him this oath: "Thou

shalt not only, while I live, shew me the kindness of the Lord that I die not, but thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever ; no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David from the face of the earth." Jonathan caused David to swear this again, because he loved him as his own soul. These assurances were gratifying as a testimony of David's friendship, and soothed Jonathan's mind amidst its sad forebodings of the calamities of his house.

The scene to which the language of the Apostle turns your attention, ye disciples of Jesus, is one which has far stronger claims on your hearts, than the most affecting incidents of human friendship. Small was the kindness which David, though a prince, could shew, compared with his who is rich in mercy. It was kindness limited to earthly advantages. But the blessings which our God swears to bestow, are all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. Attentive as David was to this solemn pledge, yet death closes the eye of watchful kindness, and in that very day its thoughts perish. But the God who swears that he will bless his people, is One whose years and whose mercy can have no end.

Let me ask you, ye professed friends of Jesus, have you fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope that is set before you ? " I looked on my right hand, but there was no man that would know me ; refuge failed me ; no man cared for my soul." Wherever I turned my eyes, I could see no shelter for my guilty soul ; and no rest for my troubled heart. The whole scene around me seemed naked and dreary as the desert, where no tree gives its shadow, and no spring its waters. " I cried to thee, O Lord ; I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living." Scarce had I said this, when his gracious hand took me in ; and here I am not only safe, but happy. " I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress ; my God, and in him I will trust." My heart is now blessing that mercy which receives and saves the hopeless, helpless outcast,

and which has received and saved me. I deserved to be driven from his gate, and to have had this answer returned to my knockings and my intreaties, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not." But the Father of mercies met me at that gate, and fell on my neck and kissed me. I am a monument to heaven and earth, of the power of his grace, and of the riches of his goodness.

How great is the consolation which the God of all grace opens to those who have thus fled from the wrath to come! It is not scanty, like the consolations of the world. To certain classes the world opens up scenes of enjoyment. To the young, the gay, and the prosperous, it exhibits all the allurements of pleasure; but for the poor it has the contempt of the proud; for the aged, all that is mortifying in neglect; for the wounded spirit, taunts which inflame it into madness, or sophistry whose false and momentary peace is succeeded by everlasting torment. But are the consolations of God small with you, ye believers in Jesus? "A man shall be as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Here oppressed innocence drops its burden, solicitude its cares, and terror its forebodings. "They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and they shall drink of the rivers of thy pleasure."

Now, Christians, to convince you of the certainty of his purpose and promise to bless you, God hath confirmed them by his oath; "I have made a covenant with my chosen; I have sworn to David my servant; thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." "This is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." These symbols of bread and wine now before you, are seals of God's covenant. They are pledges that he will be ever mindful of it and of you; and while you contemplate the

sorrows which Christ endured for your happiness, may your minds rise to the full assurance of hope.

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Let the influence of religious consolation on you, shew how well it deserves to be styled strong consolation. Such has been its power over the heart, that it has made the greatest pleasures of the world seem contemptible. It has made good men count it all joy when they fell into divers temptations. While sorrow drives others to the dark retreat of sullen despair, or while it closes the lips to all but blasphemy, the consolations of the gospel put a new song into the mouth of the pious sufferer, and fit him for the services of religion, and for the duties of society. Under their influence, youth tempted to sensual indulgence dashes on the ground the poisonous cup ; despondence takes down its harp from the willows ; cheerfulness enlivens the languid countenance of age ; and the valley of the shadow of death is filled with all manner of pleasant fruits.

How amiable does religion appear in the peace and joy of her followers ! When the tempest howls, and the face of nature is cold and dreary, we feel no inducement to go forth from our dwellings. It is the singing of birds, the verdure of the fields, and the clear and bright sky, which calls us to a scene full of the Creator's goodness. In like manner it is the contentment, the tranquillity, and the benevolence of the good, which induce many to take hold of their skirts, and to say, " we will go with you, for we have seen that God is with you."

Let not any melancholy forebodings as to futurity, damp your present consolation. Beware of staggering at the promise of God by unbelief. Shall a professed disciple of Christ offer an indignity to the God of truth so monstrous, as to doubt what he hath said and sworn ?

Let the language of your hearts be that of faith, bold and unshaken ; “ though darkness, sorrow, and desolation, should surround me, yet will I trust in the name of the Lord, and believe that he will give that which is good.” Say not, I could believe that he intended that I should be happy when he made my cup to overflow, and permitted me to enjoy communion with himself ; but I cannot think so when I have sorrow upon sorrow, and when for days no voice of mercy reaches my anxious heart. Remember the faith of Job, and honour God as he did : “ Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ; he also shall be my salvation for ever.”

Cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart. In forsaking him, of whom you have laid hold, you abandon your own mercy ; your own and your father’s friend. You have laid hold of this hope, as Joab did of the horns of the altar, when he fled to the tabernacle of the Lord for safety, and have said, like him, to those that called him to come forth, “ Nay, but I will die here.” Let others say to the gold, Thou art my hope ; lean on their own fancied excellence ; count the scene of worldly indulgence their rest ; and laugh at every idea of danger, as the idle foreboding of a melancholy enthusiasm ;—I will abide in Christ, cleave to his testimonies, and follow him whithersoever he goes. My trust in life, and my grasp in death, shall be his.

What can more strikingly shew the value of the believer’s consolation than its stability ? The most trifling incident will mar the worldly man’s enjoyment : but thou, O God, wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee. “ I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take away from you.” Some have called religious consolation a delusion ; but that cannot be a delusion, which, under the most irritating treatment, keeps the good man calm and patient ; which, in the most perplexing circumstances, makes his soul dwell at ease ; which melts the heart in benevolent sympathy ; and

which follows, not even with a sigh, the departure of advantages on which the world sets the highest value. In this consolation may you live and die, and may you find it to be an everlasting consolation. Amen.

ADDRESS LVII.

HEBREWS xii. 24.

“Ye are come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.”

THIS is one of the peculiar privileges which distinguish the gospel dispensation. Moses and Aaron acted as mediators betwixt God and Israel. To the Jews Moses made known the will of God, and for them he interceded in a manner very earnest and affectionate: “Oh this people have sinned a great sin; yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the book which thou hast written.” On a memorable occasion, when wrath went out from the Lord against Israel, and the plague was raging, Aaron took a censer, and put incense on it from the altar, and he made an atonement for the congregation. “He stood betwixt the dead and the living, and the plague was stayed.” “God said that he would destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them.” In these solemn offices they were types of the Mediator of the new covenant; and all the virtue of their interference was derived from him. To obtain our reconciliation to God, Jesus was not only willing to die, but was actually cut off from the land of the living.

The plague was raging against us, and ere it could be stayed, the man Christ Jesus must be its victim. On him it seized ; it devoured his strength, and laid him in the dust of death.

Contemplate, Christians, the necessity of your Lord's mediation, and what he did and suffered to make peace betwixt God and you. Conscience saw and felt the Almighty's anger ; and to appease it had been the aim of men for ages. Various were the methods which they adopted for this purpose. It was for this purpose that incense smoked and victims bled, as if clouds of incense could hide from the Omniscient the crimes of mortals, or streams of blood extinguish the fire of his wrath. But " we joy in God by our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." " You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your minds by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprieveable in his sight." Why, O Jesus, dost thou lie prostrate and bleeding on the earth ? It is because the chastisement of our peace was laid on thee, and for the transgressions of thy people thou art stricken. Wrath comes on thee to the uttermost, that being justified by thy blood, we might be saved from hell by thee. The cross of Christ was the place of meeting betwixt heaven and earth. On that cross the dove alights, and fixes the olive branch. As the sufferer's soul and body were separated, he saw mercy and truth meeting together, and God and his offending creature united in love. Justice and faithfulness present now no obstacle to the sinner's admission to favour ;—mercy hath now its free course ; and the heat of God's great anger is quenched in the blood of the cross ;—love rejoices over its objects, and heaven and earth unite their songs to the God of peace.

Let me ask you, Have ye come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant ? You have come to his house and to his table ; but have you approached him in faith

and penitence? Have you felt the necessity of his mediation? I saw myself condemned, and I heard the wrath of God denounced against me. The devouring surge was rushing to the spot where I lay, unable to make a single effort for my own escape; and what could my feeble arm do to beat back the great sea billows? At that instant, when I thought the proud waters would have gone over my soul, a voice cried, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further." I could scarcely believe at first that I was safe, and the roaring of the waves kept alive the terrors of my heart; but the sound sunk gradually lower and lower, I lifted up my head, and rejoiced in God my Saviour. Heaven can only exceed the bliss of that moment.

If you have accepted of the mediation of Christ, you will be ashamed of that obstinacy and folly, on your part, which made so many arguments and so much intreaty necessary to induce you to do so? I heard the voice of God, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Blessed assurance! The trembling despairing heart, that knows what it deserves from God, needs all the encouragement which it contains. I tried to stretch out the withered hand; I held him, and I would not let him go.

Are you determined to abide with him? "As the Lord liveth, and as my soul liveth, I will not leave thee." While I cling to Jesus, I am safe. The Mediator listens to your language of gratitude and affection. The feast of charity is prepared; the banner of love is waving; the God of peace is here, and thus he addresses you at his table, "I am pacified to you for all that ye have done."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace

with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Rejoice, Christians, in your security from the wrath of God. United as you are to Jesus, and interested in his atonement, the sword of justice must pass through the Mediator's heart ere it can reach you. Prize the Almighty's smiles. Think by what they were obtained for you, even by the killing sorrows of your Redeemer. What a charm does the idea of reconciliation with God shed over every scene ! It makes every comfort taste like the wine of the kingdom ; nor can any place seem gloomy to that heart which hath this delightful consciousness, that the God of peace is here. God hath spoken peace to you ; take heed lest ye turn again to folly. You may provoke your Father to anger : and from the sweetness of his smile, you may form some idea of the terror of his frown.

Be grateful to the generous Mediator. If a person has restored you to affectionate intercourse with a friend from whom you had been long separated, and in whose coldness and distance you found yourselves unhappy, you are eager to express your gratitude for the wisdom and the kindness which reconciled you. Grateful nations celebrate the merits of him, who, by a peace of honour and security, liberates a country from the terrors and the ravages of war ; and shall the generous efforts of the Lord Jesus for your happiness be forgotten ? May his goodness have in you a heart memorial !

Cultivate a forbearing and peaceable temper to your fellow-creatures. Can a man, reconciled to God, be the implacable enemy of his brother ? Put no harsh constructions on the actions of your neighbours. A proud and jealous spirit finds insults in language and conduct, where none are intended. Listen not to the tale-bearer, whose delight it is to separate chief friends. " Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, even as God, for

Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." My young friends, let not the ardour of your spirits hurry you into contention. Aged Christians, put on meekness: ye have withdrawn from the bustle of life; and let not the evil passions which agitate the world accompany you to your retirement. Your connections with the world are dissolving; but let charity, the bond of perfectness, be kept firm.

Labour to promote peace wherever your influence extends: and in the neighbourhoods where you dwell, be as a dew from the Lord, and not like firebrands, to kindle and to consume. Fret not that your efforts to make peace must be laborious and continued. "A brother offended, is harder to be won than a strong city; and their contentions are like the bars of a castle." While some appear anxious to aggravate and to perpetuate dissension, to turn coldness into fury, and silence into abuse; do all in your power to moderate and to appease wrath. "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Let the promises of that covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, be your song in the house of your pilgrimage. Its blessings are your present, and shall be your eternal portion.

The hour of death will come; and you may rejoice that the Mediator hath reconciled death to you, and can enable you to welcome him as a friend. I have made a covenant with death, says the wicked man, and with hell am I at agreement. I have made no covenant with death, exclaims the Christian, but with him who conquered it; with hell I am at perpetual war, but I have with heaven a peace that cannot be broken. The Mediator hath softened the severity of the stroke of death, and brightened the gloom of his lone retreat. How sweet is it to lay the dying body at our Lord's feet, that he may place it in the grave; and to commit the departing soul to his arms, that he may conduct it to glory!

Soon shall you come to the Mediator of the covenant on his throne. About that throne there is a rainbow, the blessed symbol of peace ; and as you approach to it, this encouraging voice shall quicken your steps, “ Well done, good and faithful servant, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.”

ADDRESS LVIII.

2 PETER i. 4.

“ Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises.”

CHRISTIANS, you are now assembled to celebrate God’s performing the mercy promised to the fathers, and his remembering his holy covenant. While you are thus employed, allow me to direct your minds to the promises of grace and consolation, which God has given you in his word, and by which he speaks peace to his saints at his table.

Contemplate these promises of the gospel in their connection with your Lord. To him they were all first made : “ In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised us in Christ before the world began.” He is the glory of the promises, and his name sheds lustre over them. The salvation they exhibit, it was the purpose of his heart from eternity to bestow. His precious blood was the price by which all the blessings contained in the promises were purchased. He pleads them in his intercession with the Father, and dispenses the benefits they contain, in his regal munificence as the ennobled Prince and Saviour.

The grace of Christ is the essence of the promises ; and for his salvation they all are stored. He indeed fills all in all. He fills all graces ; faith with strength, and love with fervour, hope with vigour, and patience with stedfastness. He fills all ordinances ; prayer with fervour, and preaching with efficacy, meditation with sweetness, and praise with gratitude : He fills heaven with glory, and earth with mercy ; time with comforts, and eternity with triumphs ; and he fills all promises. In the promise of pardon, we see his blood ; in the promise of comfort, his sympathy ; in the promise of acceptance, his righteousness ; in the promise of protection, his arm ; and in the promise of perseverance, his universal care.

It is from Jesus that the promises derive all their influence to console and to purify. He also is the stability of the promises, for “ they are all in him, yea and amen, to the glory of God by us.” And he is the end of the promises ; for, in the enjoyment of him in glory, all of them will have their consummation.

Contemplate the promises of the gospel in the blessings which they exhibit. Is pardon of sin, a blessing of the greatest value ? It screens us from the vengeance of God, and delivers from the lowest hell. Think how amply this is promised and sealed in the Lord’s supper. “ This cup is the New Testament in my blood, shed for remission of sins unto many.” Is adoption a blessing of great value ? It translates the children of wrath into the family of heaven, and makes them heirs of God. With the voice of love, Jehovah says, “ I will be a Father to you.” Are the graces of the Holy Spirit of great value ? The promises contain them all. In this ark we see lying the shield of faith, the anchor of hope, the girdle of truth, the ornament of humility, and the breast-plate of righteousness. Nay, in this blessed ark, we behold laid up the celestial palm, the sceptre, and the crown, the manna which shall be eaten, and the white robes which shall be worn in the land of glory.

Is peace of conscience a blessing of great value? "A wounded spirit who can bear?" What external incident can make him miserable, whose soul is at rest? Reflect, while the symbols of Christ's sufferings are before your eyes, on that declaration so encouraging to the heart; "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" Communion with God is a privilege you highly value. You have come to the table of Jesus, saying, "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God." Lay the promises of his presence before him, saying, "Remember the word to thy servant, on which thou hast caused me to hope." "If any man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

The devotion of your souls has, I trust, led you to the great Author of the promises, from whose heart they flow, by whose lips they were uttered, in whose word they are recorded, and in the dispensations of whose providence and grace they are accomplished. My crimes called for the voice of wrath. Had I received the due reward of my deeds, all the curses written in thy book would have been my portion; but, O my Father and my God, I am lost in wonder when I think on the gifts thou hast bestowed on me, on the wonders thou hast wrought for me, and on the promises thou hast made to me. "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation; I will call on the name of the Lord."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION,

How sweet is the consolation which the promises of

the gospel yield ! Among the disciples of Jesus, there sits a widow who has lost the guide of her youth, and has been left with few friends to care for her or her helpless children. What was it that supported thy heart, when the possessor of thine gave his last sigh ; when thy hand was laid upon his eyes ; and when his remains were conveyed from thy dwelling to its long home ? What is it that bears up thy spirit when thy children cry for their father, and intreat thee with sobs and tears to conduct them to him ? What is it which animates thy noble exertions to provide for them the comforts of the present life, and to point out to them the path that leads to a better ? I hear thy answer to these questions, It is the gracious promise of my God, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me."

Among the disciples of Jesus, there sits also one, who, by the misconduct of his connections in business, has lost his worldly property, and who has seen the wealth he had acquired by honest and virtuous industry, dissipated by folly, or pilfered from him by the basest arts. The fair prospects of his children are blasted, and nothing opens before him but toil, to which his strength is unequal, or dependence, at which the heart sickens. What is it that enables thee to possess thy soul in patience, and to trust that thou shalt never be seen forsaken, nor thy seed begging bread ? I hear thy answer : "My God shall supply all my wants, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I have seen at this table stronger ground for my hope, while contemplating the sufferings of the Son of the Highest. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?"

Contemplate the promises in the relation which they bear to the graces of the Holy Spirit, and in their influence on them. They are the firm ground on which hope casts her anchor, and the resting-place where pa-

tience reclines. Here grow the fruits by which faith is nourished, and the branches in which joy sings. Here rises the summit from which heavenly-mindedness descends the land that is afar off. Here also is the secret place where repentance weeps, and mourns before Him who doth not despise the broken and the contrite heart. She presses to her heart the reviving assurance, "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

How powerful is their influence on sanctification ! "Having these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." Consider how they appeal to every principle of gratitude within you. Has God made such promises of happiness to me, and shall not I labour to glorify him ? The promises are given, that we through them might be partakers of a divine nature, and escape the corruption that is in the world through lust. If any man claims an interest in the promises, and talks with confidence of the consolation and the hope which they give him, while his heart burns with the passions of hell, and his life is stained with the pollutions of the world, his pretensions are false and audacious. It is godliness which hath the promise of the life which now is, and also of that which is to come.

Let the promises of the gospel, Christians, be frequently read, and carefully studied by you. Mark with attention those which present themselves to your view as you search the Scriptures, and observe the particular situations to which they refer, that when Providence places you there, you may have recourse to them. Let the promises of the divine presence accompany you as you go to the house of the Lord. In the hours of labour, think of him who undertakes to prosper the work of your hands ; and in the midst of your families, let your reflections often turn on the assurances which God has given, of the delight which he will testify in the culture and prosperity of the domestic virtues.

Complain not of the delay of the accomplishment of the promises. "The Lord is a God of judgment, and blessed are all they that wait for him." Loaded as you are with benefits at present, and permitted to enjoy the happiness of futurity in the anticipations of faith and hope, impatience is in you most unreasonable and ungrateful. Its peevish repinings will be the torment of the heart that listens to them. Never doubt the stability of the promises. Calvary must be forgotten by you, when you imagine that he will break his covenant, or alter the word which has gone out of his lips. "He that believeth not, hath made God a liar." From impiety so monstrous, and from every approach to it, your hearts must shrink.

Regard with contempt the fairest promises of Satan and of the world. My young friends, to you this caution is peculiarly necessary ; for experience hath not yet taught you the deceit of their lips, nor the malice of their hearts. Thousands around you are cursing the hour when, by listening to them, they were ruined.

Keep ever in remembrance the promises you have this day made to God, of attachment to his cause, and of obedience to his law. Fidelity is the last of the weightier matters of the law spoken of by our Lord. Maintain it in all situations, and implore the aids of his grace, the mercy and truth which will preserve you, that you may daily perform your vows.

ADDRESS LIX.

REVELATIONS ii. 17.

“ To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the hidden manna ; and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.”

It was a glorious prophecy with regard to Cyrus, which the Lord of old delivered by the prophet Isaiah : “ Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him ; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut. I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron. And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know, that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel.” This employment of Cyrus, great and important as it was, is not worthy to be compared with the conflicts of the obscurest saint with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and with the corrupt propensities of his own heart. And how low seems the reward of Cyrus in the treasures of darkness, to yours in the hidden manna, in blessings which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard ? Cyrus, in accomplishing the purposes of heaven, was like the lightning in its course of ruin. He was unconscious of the hand which guided him, and which prepared his way. But the hearts of the good are in their Lord’s work, and his law is within their souls.

What think you, my friends, of the combats of reli-

gion? Would you rather struggle with Christ, than triumph with the world? Would you rather suffer with Christ, than reign with the wicked? Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; yet sweeter to me is this confused noise, than the laughter that is mad, or the songs of wanton gaiety; and better to me are these garments, than the covering of tapestry, or the fine linen of Egypt, with which sensual pleasure decks her couch.

Your contest with your spiritual enemies is arduous. A mind torn with anxiety, a pillow watered with tears, ordinances embittered by frightful suggestions, and the scoffs of cruel pride, are often the attendants of this conflict. Satan's temptations are adapted with the utmost skill to the constitutional bias, and proposed in the most plausible manner, and in the most urgent form. Paul himself besought the Lord thrice, that the messenger of Satan might depart from him. How painful is the struggle with that pride which religious attainments are apt to foster; that envy which is so likely to awake at the superior successes of a brother; that indolence which makes duty a burden; that despondence which deems all exertion unavailing; and that carnality which cleaves to the dust! How difficult is it to struggle with unreasonable men, to dispel the darkness of prejudice, to oppose the wide-spreading rage of fashionable folly, and to prefer the afflictions of the saints to all that the world can offer! And what a serious conflict is the Christian's conflict with the last enemy! The sweat bursting through every pore; the convulsive shaking of every limb; the earnest elevation of the failing eye, and the trembling hand; and the often repeated cry, Help us, O God of our salvation—prove that this is no easy struggle.

But rejoice, ye good soldiers of Jesus Christ, in the hope of victory. "In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us." He will strengthen you with all might, and endow you with all

wisdom. It is by that blood of the Lamb that you overcome, the shedding of which ye are now commemorating.

Contemplate the rewards which Jesus will bestow on his faithful soldiers. In beauty, how enchanting ! in possession, how sure ! in bestowal, how free ! and in worth, how great ! They shall eat of the hidden manna. The manna which was rained on Israel, was a type of the influences and comforts of the Saviour's grace. It beautifully exhibited these in its heavenly descent, and in its nourishing qualities. It is supposed that it is called the hidden manna, because it was put in a golden pot, and kept in the most holy place, secret from every eye. And with the joys of religion, a stranger doth not intermeddle. The sense of that love which is better than life, the delightful impression of Christ's sympathy, the pleasure which flows from the feelings of devotion, from the testimony of conscience, and the assurance of salvation arising from the seal and the witness of the Holy Spirit, are included under this figure. Are your souls hungering for this manna ? This bread of life is sweet indeed to the longing soul ! and most invigorating to the fainting heart ! May you be able to say, "Thy hidden manna was found of me, O Jesus, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and the rejoicing of my soul."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Jesus promises to give to his faithful soldiers the white stone. John is supposed to refer here to a custom among the Greeks and Romans. When the people gave their suffrages for the condemnation of a criminal, they cast a black stone into an urn ; and for his acquittal they threw in a white one. The expression, therefore, intimates, that their Lord will give them a complete acquittal from all the charges which have been

brought against them. Some experience of this the saints have, even in the present state. It is at some happy moments, often at the communion table, that they can exclaim, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?" But at the day of judgment this acquittal shall be announced in the fullest and most decisive manner. The sentence of judgment shall vindicate you from every calumny, wipe from your names every foul imputation, silence every accuser for ever, and crown you with everlasting glory. This white stone you shall wear as a jewel in that diadem which Christ will place upon your heads; and its beauty and its lustre shall be perpetual as the diadem itself.

But Jesus will give you the new name. The allusion is supposed, in this expression, to be to the custom of princes, who give new names to those whom they have raised to peculiar dignity, and to familiar intercourse with themselves. And what are the titles by which Jesus distinguishes his own? He calls them the blessed of his Father, and the chosen of his heart; the purchase of his blood, and the champions of his cause; the children of his care, and the sharers of his joy. These are not empty names, like many of the titles bestowed among men. Is it a name of honour? It is joined with the most distinguished exaltation. Is it a name of influence? It is accompanied with the most extensive powers. Is it a name of admiration? It is associated with the most estimable qualities. Is it a name of friendship? It is followed with the most endearing intimacy.

The high-sounding titles of men pass quickly away. Engrave them ever so deep on the lofty pillar, how soon are they defaced! Scarce has fame fixed one favourite on her slippery place, and sounded his name from her trumpet, ere she thrusts him down to make way for another. But they that stand with the Lamb on Mount Sion, shall never be moved.

Your enemies make these privileges and hopes the

objects of their derision ; but the day is coming when they shall see them, and gnash with their teeth, and melt away.

Remember, Christians, what Jesus suffered to obtain for you these privileges. He was fed with the bread of tears, to procure for you this hidden manna ; made of no reputation, to obtain for you this new name ; and to procure for you this white stone, he was condemned by Jews and Gentiles.

Arise from the table of Jesus, to carry on your spiritual warfare with more alacrity than ever. The words of the angel of the Lord to Gideon, he now addresses to his good soldiers, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour." Satisfy not yourselves with saying, in general, "The people that do know their God, shall be strong and do exploits ;" but apply it to yourselves ; and say not with the presumption that goes before defeat, but with that reliance on the aid of heaven, which makes the feeble strong in the power of his might, "Through God we shall do valiantly ; for he it is that shall tread down our enemies before us." You have seen the wax melting before the fire, and the dust scattered by the breeze ; and in these you see how your enemies shall perish, and how their mightiest efforts against you shall come to nought. In a short time your last combat will come ; and can you bear the thought of its closing on you in dishonour, with your armour broken, and your garments spotted by the flesh ? The hero who expires in the arms of victory, is extolled as the noblest of human beings, and in his praise pillars of memorial raise their heads to the skies ; but what is he to the saint who dies with Satan under his feet, and who, from the arms of death, springs upward to immortality ?

You are disposed sometimes to complain that you are allowed, at present, so little of his hidden manna. But thus God tries your faith and patience, and thus he raises your longings for that world where this manna

shall be so far from ceasing, that it will fall in greater abundance than ever it fell here. Fellowship without a medium, and beauty without a veil; love without a frown, and confidence without a suspicion; joy without mixture, and glory without end, are the privileges of heaven. Rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and of seeing and sharing the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.

ADDRESS LX.

REVELATION vii. 9, 10.

“After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.”

WHAT an interesting view of the worshippers and of the worship of heaven! The contemplation of this scene will assuredly give fervour to our devotion, and expansion to our charity.

Contemplate the number of these worshippers! The language of the Apostle conveys the idea of the vastness of it, “A multitude, a great multitude, a great multitude which no man could number.” The enemies of Christianity have often represented it as a scheme which exhibits the Deity as aiming at the happiness of a few, and consigning, without mercy, almost the whole of our race to perdition. And perhaps the dark and contracted notions of certain religionists, have furnished them with

some plausible arguments for supporting this imputation. But what was the design of the great Author of our faith? It was to bring many sons to glory. For whom did Jesus die? "He was once offered to bear the sins of many." To whom does he wish his salvation offered? He orders repentance and remission of sins to be preached in his name to all nations; and if little has been done in this respect, it must be ascribed to this, that men have been more eager to encrease their temporal advantages, than to make known the grace which brings salvation, and that few hearts have glowed with the benevolence of the Saviour. The result of the mediatorial scheme, is stated by the Apostle in language the most gratifying to the spirit of charity. The worth of the Lamb shall not be sung by a few solitary individuals; nor shall that song rise before the throne low and feeble, it shall be the anthem of the nations of them that are saved, and shall be louder than the sound of many waters, and of mighty thunder.

But from whence came this vast multitude? From all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Every tribe on earth shall send forth soldiers to Messiah's standard, and every language of the world shall proclaim his glory. Around the throne hostile tribes shall meet in perfect friendship; and those who were once despised as barbarians shall be hailed as brethren. The gentleness of Christ shall conquer the ferocity of the savage; the prejudices of the idolater shall fall before the wisdom of the just; and even the pride of philosophy shall humble itself before the spirit of the cross. Those whom the incantations of the false prophet have thrown into so deep a slumber, shall arise and seek the way to Sion; and the war-hoop of the savage, the signal of death and devastation, shall give place to the cry, "Salvation to the Lamb."

Contemplate the posture of these worshippers. They stood before the throne, and before the Lamb. Once they were afar off, but they were brought nigh by the

blood of Jesus ; and by the merits of that blood they were received to glory. There they appear, not in the attitude of suppliants, for they now have nought to ask ; but they stand there as devoted servants, ready to execute every mandate which their Redeemer may issue. The expression points out their holy confidence. When the Apostle John saw the glory of Christ in Patmos, he fell at his feet as dead ; but they stand before the throne, and before the Lamb. The throne is the seat of Majesty, but they know it to be a throne of grace. Jesus is glorified, but they know that he is still meek, and lowly, and gentle in heart.

Contemplate the attire of these worshippers. They are clothed in white robes. While on earth they were arrayed in the righteousness of Christ, but their sanctification was imperfect ; now their characters are free from every spot, and their hearts from every corruption, and every grace shines in perfect lustre. They wear, too, the garments of festivity and joy. These are garments that never wax old, and never can contract a stain. These robes cover not one sad heart.

They have palms in their hands. They have laid down the sword and the spear, and taken up these palms as emblems of their victory over sin and Satan, the world, and death. From the tree of life these palms were taken ; and as they wave them, they cry, Let us twine them around thy head, O thou Captain of salvation, for it was thou that didst tread down our enemies before us.

Contemplate their exercise. They cry with a loud voice. Here the dread of ridicule sometimes suppresses their grateful effusions, and the voice of praise is often choaked by the workings of heart bitterness ; but now their joy is full, and their gratitude finds no obstacle to impede its thanksgivings. Glorious as their condition is, no emotion of pride rises in their hearts. They feel, that to divine grace they owe their all. They cry, Salvation to our God. We ascribe the glory of salvation

to Him by whom its plan was devised, by whom the Saviour was sent, and by whom its blessings are bestowed. Salvation to the Lamb. We ascribe the glory of salvation to Him who lived and died in our nature, and rose and interceded for our happiness. Salvation to the Holy Ghost. We ascribe the glory of salvation to the Eternal Spirit, by whom it was applied, by whom our natures were regenerated, and our sorrows soothed, and our graces cherished, and our steps guided, and by whom we were prepared for death and for heaven.

But can we mingle our devotions with these worshippers? Oh how shall we sing the song of heaven in this strange land! Amidst such worship, will Jesus listen to our broken and feeble effusions of gratitude? These worshippers call on you to imbibe their spirit. The eyes of the Redeemer are on you, and his ears are open to your cry; and contemplating him dying on the cross, whom they behold shining on the throne, exclaim, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour."

AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION.

Listen, Christians, to those lessons of duty which this scene, to which I have directed your attention, suggests. Learn from it to cherish more warmly the spirit of Christian candour and liberality, and to manifest it in your prayers, your opinions, and your conduct. Thus will you honour the power of the Saviour's grace, and recommend his religion to others as a system of peace and good-will to men. The spirit of bigotry excites the disgust of many an ardent mind at the religion whose name it assumes, and drives, by its repulsive frown, from the gates of Zion, those whom the benignant smile of Christian charity might have won. The spirit which directs its railings and its anathemas against all who think not according to its system, and walk not accord-

ing to its rules, is the spirit which, in the excesses of its rancour, stretched its victims on the rack, and kindled its faggots round the stake.

Let your prayers and your efforts be directed to promote the diffusion of the religion of Christ. The success of the gospel of our Lord swells the myriads that surround the throne. How high is the honour which God is conferring on this country, and on this age, in calling us to be the instruments of extending the triumphs of the Saviour! A sphere is opened, in which the contributions of the poorest may co-operate with the donations of the rich, for filling the whole earth with the glory of Jesus. Beneficence is one of the great lessons which are taught in the ordinance of the Lord's supper. And what beneficence? Is it the beneficence that confines itself merely to the temporal necessities of the poor around us? Is that the only, or the chief beneficence taught us by the death of Him who bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors? Is it not a beneficence which extends to all our fellow creatures, and which labours to save them from the bondage of corruption, and from the pains of hell? The return of peace widens the sphere of zealous exertion. The angel who has been seen flying in the midst of heaven, amid the tempests of war, will advance with more brightness and rapidity in the serene sky of peace; even that angel who has the everlasting gospel to publish to all nations of men that dwell upon the face of the earth. Shall the efforts which were made for disseminating the religion of Christ, amidst the perils, the burdens, and the exertions of war, be relaxed at the return of peace? Shall they not be maintained and extended? The sword is returning to its scabbard, and the warrior to his home, the banner is folded up, and the trumpet is laid aside; but the ensign of the Messiah is unfurled, and the joyful sound is waxing louder and louder. The missionary girds on his harness; and the Bible goes forth conquering and to conquer. And shall we rise

from a scene where we have been contemplating the struggles and the consummation of the Saviour's grace, cold and careless in such a cause ?

Labour to advance in goodness. Consider the pattern to which you are required to be conformed, even the excellence of Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens. Study the character of your Lord more carefully than ever, that you may be guided and animated in the imitation of it. "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit yourselves like men, be strong." These palms are not the reward of the sluggard, who hides his hand in his bosom ; or of the coward, who skulks from the heat of the battle ! but of the good soldier of Jesus Christ, who shews a zeal and a patience, a fidelity and a courage, becoming the cause in which he contends.

Ascribe to God the praise of all the attainments you make, and of all the comforts you enjoy at present : "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be the glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." The vigour of your bodies, and the soundness of your minds, are from him who is the health of your countenance, and the Father of your spirits. Your domestic felicity, you owe to him who is the God of your families. For the respect in which you are held by your neighbours, you are indebted to him who hath given you favour in their sight. Your progress in religion, is from the God of all grace. "What hast thou that thou hast not received ? and if thou hast received, why shouldest thou boast as if thou hadst not received it ?"

Anticipate the time when you shall mingle with this triumphant multitude, and join your cry with theirs. And can you be unwilling to quit your sackcloth for such white robes, the songs of Zion for this anthem, and your friends on earth for such companions ; nay, for the Saviour himself in glory ? Let your affections and your praises, your manners and your pursuits, rise above the present world ; and may the Spirit of God

and of glory rest upon you ! Soon shall you find, that the loftiest ideas which you had formed of the assembly above, in its number, exercise, and felicity, were far below what they ought to have been ; and looking back on the services of the sanctuary below, you will think that your most serious emotions scarce deserved the name of piety, and that your most ardent thanksgivings had almost no claim to be received as praise. “ Thy will, O God, be done on earth, as it is done in heaven ;” and let the church below, more nearly resemble the church above. Amen.

SERMON I.

ON THE SPIRIT WITH WHICH THE LORD'S SUPPER
SHOULD BE KEPT.

1 Cor. v. 8.

“ Let us keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”

IN this chapter the apostle condemns, with all the zeal of a pure and a heavenly mind, the corruptions which prevailed in the Church of Corinth. Had he observed a total silence on this subject, or had he spoken of those abuses in the language of extenuation, he might have avoided the opposition and reproach to which he was subjected, but he would have degraded his office as an Apostle of Christ, and encouraged in their sins those whom he was bound to warn by the terrors of the Lord. They had retained in their communion a most atrocious offender, to their own hurt, and to the discredit of their profession ; and they profaned the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, by various excesses of intemperance and strife.

How low must have been the state of moral feeling in a church where such things were tolerated ! It is evident that, with the Christian profession, some of them wished to incorporate many of the vicious indulgences of heathenism. They were Christians only in name ; and they imagined that, by assimilating their newly

adopted worship to the ceremonies of idolatry, they would most effectually secure themselves from indignity and censure. Such conduct filled the mind of Paul with grief and horror ; and he insists on a correction of such abuses, in a manner which would convince them that he would be satisfied with no excuse, nor palliation, nor partial amendment. He commands them instantly to expel the offender, and to renounce completely the sensual habits and practices of their former state. The Jewish passover was at hand, at which time the disciples were accustomed to observe the Lord's Supper with peculiar solemnity, and he exhorts them in language suited to the ceremonies of that feast, to keep it with a pure heart, with a good conscience, and with faith unfeigned. Thus would a reformation commence which would render their church a praise in the earth ; and thus would the holy feast be magnified in its moral power.

However different our circumstances are from theirs, we must be conscious that with us there are evils which we must put away ere we approach this feast ; and he who is ignorant of these, or who feels no anxiety for their removal, is not a true disciple of the Redeemer. Let us lift our eyes to God for the preparation of the sanctuary, while I address you in the words of Joshua to the Israelites, " Sanctify yourselves, for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you."

In this discourse I shall,

I. Explain the Apostle's prohibition of the improper manner in which the holy feast has been kept.

II. Point out the manner in which we ought to observe it. And,

III. Recommend a compliance with the charge in the text by some considerations.

I. In condemning the improper manner in which the Lord's Supper has been kept, the Apostle cautions us against keeping it with the old leaven. By the old leaven we must understand those intemperate and sensual

excesses to which the Corinthians were addicted in their heathen state, and which were practised in the worship of many of their deities. That they might fall into such pollutions, was an apprehension excited in Paul's mind by what he knew of the power of evil habits, and by the irregularities of which some of them had been already guilty in Christian ordinances.

We wish that we could say that such an admonition was not needful in our own land, but the fact is notorious, that in some places the Lord's Supper is resorted to by young persons to enjoy the company of their acquaintances, and that, by others, 'it is considered as an excursion for pleasure or festivity. So loose have been the manners of some who have attended on the tent services of such solemnities, that names have been given to this ordinance shocking to the feelings of the pious; and when we hear of persons returning from them in a state of intoxication, we may be well amazed that God does not overwhelm them by his tempest. What a horrid indignity is such conduct in the scene where Christ is seen wounded for our transgressions, and where we behold him giving himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. As such displays of folly are made by persons who mingle in the mixed multitude at the services without, it is desirable that these should now be abolished. It is to no purpose to say that the religious advantage of many is not to be sacrificed on account of the irregularities of some; for opportunities of instruction are open to them in their own churches, where the word is spoken with the spirit of power and love, if not with the charm of novelty, and the holy exercise and comfort of the meek and quiet spirit is disturbed and marred by the bustle of the restless and the levities of the giddy. We cannot look to the solemn stillness of that chamber in which our Lord instituted this ordinance, and to the calm retiring piety of the whole scene, and not feel that the noisy movements of a

surrounding crowd, and the empty parade of a pompous ritual, are as unsuitable to the character of this sacrament, as they are to the taste of a spiritual mind.

But we must not think it enough that we are not chargeable with such gross offences, for if we come to the Lord's Table with criminal passions, licentious desires, or a carnal mind, God will assuredly number us with the impure. It is a gross indignity to the Saviour to offer him a heart wedded to its corruptions, though this should be done with the greatest profusion of pious expressions ; and to say to him that we hate sin, while we have but slight impressions of its malignity, and are disposed to take the first opportunity of committing it. How dreadful is it to pray, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults," while we are determined to indemnify ourselves by such wickedness for the outward austerities which our station or character obliges us to practise, and while we exult in the veil which conceals them from the world, as if its eye was the only eye that could find us out, as if its censure was the only censure that was to be feared !

You shudder at the idea of such aggravated guilt ; and let me beseech you to show that this is no transient nor feeble impression, but cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. The least particle of this leaven will corrupt all your exercise, and mar all your enjoyment.

But the Apostle charges us also, not to keep it with the leaven of malice and wickedness. Malice is hatred and ill-will in the feelings, intentions, and purposes of the heart, and wickedness is that hatred and ill-will manifested in the conduct. There was much reason for addressing this caution to the Corinthians, for such were the violent contentions in that church, that when they observed the Lord's Supper, they formed themselves into separate companies, and abused, for expressing and

strengthening their dislike to each other, an ordinance which Christ has appointed as a feast of love.

Somewhat of this spirit has been seen in the leaders of some parties in this land. Ere they observed this ordinance, they, under pretence of setting a rail around the Lord's table, have exhibited in the darkest colours every religious denomination but their own, and succeeded in exciting harsh feelings respecting them. The pride of bigotry, and the bitterness of invective, ill become the commemoration of a meek and lowly Saviour. Such was the spirit of the Pharisee, whose worship in the temple our Lord hath described, and whose language he records as an admonition to us. Odious as the vices were as to which he made his boast that he was free, he had no right to exult over their victims, or to vaunt of his purity; and far less are any entitled to aggravate, before the altar of God, the faults or mistakes of others, which they have seen with the eye of prejudice or suspicion. This practice may be dignified with the name of faithful testimony, but it kindles the fire of human wrath on the altar of God, and banishes from the Communion Table those sweet charities which are its ornament and its blessing. If there are parties with whom we cannot join in this ordinance, on account of the difference of sentiment betwixt us, we must not exclude them from the benevolent wishes of our hearts, nor the kind services of our lives. The Church's warning against unworthy communicating, should be directed to secret sins; and commemorating the shedding of that blood, whose redeeming virtue extends to every kindred, and people, and nation, we must feel how unsuitable to such a scene is the spirit of animosity and selfishness, and how ill it becomes those who are saved by grace, to imagine that any walls of partition can impede its progress, or that any demerit is too gross for its plea for forgiveness. It is most absurd, nay, impious, to limit, within our own pale, the influence of his cross who gave himself a ran-

som for many, and amidst the triumphs of love, to glow with party rage.

But we must not keep the feast with malice or wickedness against any of our fellow worshippers. We must banish from our minds all unpleasant impressions of their conduct to us, and we must take them to our hearts as our friends and our brethren. We are not to think of them as opponents to our interests, or rivals in our plans, but as disciples of the same Master, and as expectants of the same salvation. At the entry to the Communion Table every animosity must be buried. Christ praying for murderers, and dying for enemies, must extinguish every hostile feeling in our breasts; and while we receive the pledges of mercy from God, we must form the purpose of charity to man. The children of God are like olive plants around this table, blooming in holy beauties, and refreshed by the dew of Zion; but the children of Belial are like briars and thorns, which are nigh unto cursing, and shall be utterly burnt with fire in the same place.

In the retreat of holy meditation to which we ought to retire before the Lord's Supper, we may see the emptiness of those objects of pursuit which have excited our contention and our envy, and the insufficiency of those excuses by which we have justified to ourselves and to others our revenge or our rancour: and while we pray for pardon to ourselves, we will feel the necessity of extending to those who have injured us, a forgiveness sincere, complete, and lasting, like that which we solicit. From this retreat we will go to the altar of God with a heart soft and tender; and if the thought of those who have injured us should rise in the mind, it will be met by a determination to overcome their evil with good.

II. I proceed now to show in what manner this solemn feast should be kept. This must be done with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. A learned commentator remarks, that the Apostle gives the epithet of unleavened to sincerity and truth, in allusion to the

emblematical meaning of the unleavened bread which the Israelites were to eat during the feast of the Pass-over; for thereby they were taught to celebrate that feast with pious and virtuous dispositions. The word "bread" is a supplement, and the term *qualities* might have been as properly applied to the adjective *unleavened*.

1. We should keep this feast with sincerity in our profession. In this ordinance we profess our belief in the divinity of our religion, in its histories, doctrines, and laws; and most detestable is his duplicity who makes this profession while he considers it as a cunningly devised fable, or while he has no proper impression of its heavenly origin and character. Our feelings in this ordinance should be like those of the Apostle, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Our faith in the gospel must be as superior to the art of the infidel's cavils, as it is to the power of his sarcasms.

We profess in this ordinance our submission to Christ as our Master; and it must not be made with the treachery of Judas, when he came forward and said, Hail, Master, and kissed him; but with the fervid emotion of Thomas, when he said, My Lord and my God. We profess it in our union with the church, our attachment to her members, and our desire to walk with them in the ordinances and commandments of Christ; and this must not be made with any reservation of contempt or hostility to any individuals or families, or with an intention to neglect any observance, or any purpose to follow the suggestions of our own caprice; but with the fixed design of affectionate adherence in every season and in every form.

We profess to be like Israel on a journey to Canaan, and that we are strangers and pilgrims upon earth; and it must not be made with a heart minding earthly things, but with our hearts in heaven as the place of our best treasure, and as the abode of our dearest friends.

2. We must keep this feast with sincerity and truth, in the exercise of the gracious principles and feelings

which are required in it. It is not a mere ceremony, where external pomp or decorum is all that is requisite; but it is an act of religious worship acceptable only to the great searcher of hearts, as it indicates pious dispositions. It is not with the worship which will convince our fellow-creatures that we are sincere that we must be satisfied, nor with that enthusiastic excitement which deludes the carnal mind into the presumptuous conceit that the Spirit of God and of glory rests upon it; but with such service only as evinces that the truth which God desires is in the inward parts. We must receive the atonement with a cordial faith, mourn for sin with a broken heart, cleave to Jesus with ardent love, and put on bowels of mercy to our brethren. It is not with a fair show in the flesh that God is well pleased, but with godliness controlling and animating the heart. Though a communicant had the form of an angel of light, yet without the Spirit of Christ he is none of his.

Our faith must not be a general assent to the gospel, arising from the cold study of its evidence, or the mere result of education, but a conviction formed by the Spirit of truth through the perception of the divine testimony. Our repentance must not be the condemnation and regret which are felt in the misery of sin, but the abhorrence which detests its evil nature, and the grief which bewails the alienation of the heart from the living God. And our love must not be the glow of feeling produced by the workings of a bright fancy, but the devotedness of the whole heart to God, and the appropriation of its sympathy and tendencies to all that he loves.

3. We must be sincere in the purposes which we form. At the holy table, we must not only remember what is past, and regard what is exhibited before us with suitable emotions, but we must form good resolutions as to the future, resolutions respecting the government of our passions, the occupying of our talents, the subduing of our corruptions, the culture of grace, the promotion of religion, and the advancement of the best

interests of our brethren ; and these must not be the hasty purposes of a transitory feeling produced by a scene of terror, or a signal display of the divine goodness, but the settled purposes of a heart devoted to godliness, and determined to follow the Lord fully.

When we think on the purposes of a worldly kind, which are formed in scenes adopted to excite the feelings and the wishes of the spectators, of the plans of enterprise sketched amidst the display of wealth and power, or of study amidst the honours paid to successful genius ; when we think what difficulties are surmounted in the execution of such designs, how firmly they are held amidst ridicule, or abuse, or disappointment, we may blush for the feebleness and the inconstancy of our holy purposes, and should resolve that, for the future, they shall be made and kept with the whole heart.

Our promises must not be like those of the Israelites, who remembered that God was their rock, and the High God their Redeemer, nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied to him with their tongue, for their heart was not right with him, neither was their spirit stedfast in his covenant ; but they must be the assurances of a love which will be faithful to death, and of a piety which will go on to perfection. We must not turn aside like the deceitful bow, but must hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering. It would be wise, in the prospect of the Lord's Supper, to read over the purposes of holy men recorded in Scripture, and to pray that God may give us grace to form them with the same pious determination, and to execute them with the same fidelity. If the rites of the ancient dispensation were felt as requiring and strengthening such holy purposes, much more must this be the case with the institutions of the New, where so little appeals to the eye, but so much to the heart.

III. Let me now suggest some considerations, which may excite us duly to regard the charge in the text.

Consider how offensive it is to God, to keep the feast in a manner different from that which he has prescribed. It is a contempt of his authority, and an opposition to the brightest discoveries of his character. God is holy, and calls on us to put away iniquity far from us, yet the unworthy communicant rolls it like a sweet morsel under his tongue. God is love, yet the malicious will, in his presence, cherish the feelings of revenge. God is true, yet the hypocrite compasses him about with lies and deceits. A breach of the law in a Court of Justice, or in the king's palace, is considered as peculiarly aggravated, and as demanding summary punishment; and let us think how vile it must be to come before God, with hearts burning with impurity, or with lips uttering the language of falsehood.

Let us consider how dangerous it is thus to profane this ordinance. You know what the sons of Aaron suffered for offering strange fire on God's altar; and, though no visible judgment should now befall such offenders, the Lord may give them up to the lusts of their own hearts, and suffer them to bite and to devour one another. The wicked practices in which some indulge, who once had a name to live, are a token of perdition from his hand, whose right to inflict it none can question, whose power none can resist, and whose wrath none can endure. No vice so certainly seals a man to ruin in both worlds as impurity, no temper tortures the heart like revenge, and no character is so unlikely to be formed to genuine excellence as that of the hypocrite. No sins are so seldom repented of as those which are committed after solemn pledges to virtue, or after striking warnings from heaven against them. It is to such offenders Isaiah says, "Let sinners in Zion be afraid, let fearfulness surprise the hypocrite; who shall dwell with devouring fire, who can abide with everlasting burning?" Consider how much your own happiness is concerned in those injunctions. A pretender to friendship can taste none of its pleasure, and an evil spirit is

the curse of solitude as well as of society, but the spirit of benevolence is the spirit of happiness. It is in the pure and benevolent heart that God loves to dwell, and there he sheds abroad his blessings. It is sincerity that he delights to honour even in its humblest garb, and in its lowliest sphere. It was because the mite of the widow was the offering of the heart, that Christ preferred it to the most ample gifts of the ostentatious; and it was because the hosannahs of the children were artless and affectionate, that he delighted in them more than in all the melody of the temple.

Consider also how earnestly God desires that we should worship him in spirit and in truth. "Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep my commandments always." You would shudder at the thought of disregarding a parent's wish, and can you condemn that of a Father in heaven, who speaks in the melting language of love, and wishes rather to allure than to awe us to our duty?

Think how much the honour of this ordinance is concerned in your regard to this charge. If the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is profaned by the admission of vicious characters to its table, or by the malignity and sensuality in which those who observe it indulge when it is ended, the enemies of the gospel will class it with the Carnivals of Popery, or the feasts of Baal; and they will assert that it is regarded as giving a license to sin till the period of its return. It is by the purity and charity of the disciples that this ordinance will be made to appear to them, in its memorial, its pledges, its feelings, and its hopes, the excitement and the security of all that is holy and good.

And let us reflect how soon we shall be called to account for our mode of worship, and that the day is coming in which God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel. This account may be so near to some, that to the hypocrite God may be saying, "This is the last sacrament I will

permit thee to profane ;” and the self-examination that man now scorns, will be forced upon him by that confounding question, “ What hadst thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatedst instruction, and castedst my words behind thee ?” May our Judge find in us the piety and love which his grace delights to form, to witness now, and to acknowledge hereafter.

CONCLUSION.

Let good men implore increasing measures of divine influence, to promote purity and benevolence within them. The prayer for grace is the most acceptable which can rise to the Father of goodness. In every part of your conduct, as well as at the Lord’s table, show your regard to this charge. Let integrity and truth ever influence you. Never depreciate what you know to be valuable for the sake of any advantage, nor exalt what you despise in your hearts. In partaking with others of the gratifications of life, maintain a wise temperance, and never let your spirits be irritated, nor evil passions excited by excess. Let all your intercourse with your fellow-creatures be so managed as to promote kind affections. Let the estimation you express be judicious and sincere, and your disapprobation such as to be liable to no imputation of vindictive feeling. Sincerity and charity form the sweetest reflections for the close of life, and prepare for the marriage supper of the Lamb, when the fine linen, clear and white, shall indicate the perfection of purity and love in every worshipper.

Let those who keep this feast in the mere form of goodness reflect, that though they have done so with impunity, the Judge of all is not indifferent to their conduct. It was not at the first banquet which Esther had prepared that Haman was led forth to his doom. It was while he sat at the second that his wickedness was disclosed, and that the King arose in his wrath,

and gave the order for his destruction. At the first banquet, all seemed to him fair and smiling, and his pride and revenge were gratified to the full. At the second he is filled with confusion and horror, and falls into the hands of the living God. Take warning by his fate, and turn now to the Lord, and serve him with your whole heart. What a blessedness will true piety shed over this Sacrament ; a blessedness wholly new to you ; a blessedness permanent in its nature, and which will turn what is now to you an irksome form, into a tribute of love and joy !

And let not any promise themselves peace in impurity and malice, because they do not keep this feast. God abhors those sins, in whatever form they appear, and in whatever place they are exhibited. Think how wicked it is to pray, while you regard iniquity in your heart, to fast for strife, and to hear the Gospel of peace for debate. You keep at a distance from the Lord's table, and by this conduct you show that you have no wish for the fellowship and the song of the blessed hereafter. The unclean spirit, the father of lies, and the murderer from the beginning, shall claim you as his children, and shall triumph when he leads you to the torments prepared for himself. O think what it must be to have your soul gathered with sinners, and to endure the misery of everlasting fire. Draw nigh then to God, and he will draw nigh to you ; cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Have recourse to that blood which flows from the Cross, and receive that grace which the Gospel offers to save you from your sins.

SERMON II.

THE COMMUNION OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

HEB. xii. 25.

“ Ye are come to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

WITH these words the Apostle closes his interesting and comprehensive summary of the peculiar privileges of Christians ; and it is impossible to consider the advantages which are here specified, without feeling that we are blessed in enjoying what the righteous, in distant ages, longed in vain to witness. Our text leads us back to the first age of the world, and to an atrocious crime committed at that period, and draws from it a very striking illustration of the excellence and efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ. Here we behold the first martyr of the Old Testament, and the first martyr of the New, and the murder of the former followed by the vengeance of heaven, and the horror of the criminal, while from the latter redemption and peace flow to a guilty world. It is with the greatest propriety that this result of our Lord's death is here stated, for the Hebrews might be afraid of being overwhelmed by the judgments of God, on account of the treatment which the Lord Jesus had received from their nation ; and to them it must have been most delightful to learn, that repentance and remission of sins were to be offered in his name to his bitterest foes.

Of the seven privileges of the Gospel Church, mentioned in this passage, the one specified in the text is most sweet and soothing to a mind troubled with the

consciousness of guilt ; to one in this situation the view of splendid honours can give no pleasure, for they are objects for which he feels he dares not hope ; and by the contrast which he forms betwixt them and the degradation in which he is sinking, the heart is wrung with such anguish, that it gladly turns away from contemplations which to others are most delightful. Such a man views himself as the object of abhorrence to angels, and as condemned already by the Judge of all ; but let him go to the blood of sprinkling, and listen to its voice ; let him see his stains passing away under its purifying influence, and feel its healing power in his wounds, and his hope will rise, and his joy will abound.

This is a part of the Christian's privileges which appears peculiarly delightful when contrasted with the state and feelings of Israel at Sinai. On that mount there were thousands of angels, and God appeared in tremendous majesty as a Lawgiver and a Judge. The trumpet sounded, the thunder roared, and a voice was heard which overwhelmed the mind with fear ; but the blood of sprinkling, which flows on Mount Calvary, assures the sinner that God is love ; and while it is shed, the heavens send down their mildest rays, and angels strike their harps to the notes of peace. And while we are led to this blood in the preaching of the word, and in the ordinance of the supper, may we be enabled to improve it for all those purposes for which it is destined, to wash our robes, and to make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

In the following discourse I shall call your attention,

- I. To the blood of sprinkling.
- II. To the better things which it speaks ; and,
- III. To the privilege of Christians as having come to it.

I. In speaking of the blood of sprinkling, it is proper that I should remark, that this title is given to the sa-

crifice of Christ in allusion to the sprinkling of blood under the former dispensation. There were three instances of this during that period, so memorable in their design, and in their circumstances, that we may suppose that there is a peculiar reference to them in this expression; the first was the sprinkling of the blood of the Paschal Lamb by the Israelites on the lintels and the two side-posts of their doors, that the destroying angel, in passing over the land, might not come into their dwellings to smite them. By this method they were preserved unhurt in that dreadful night in which the first-born of every Egyptian family perished. And when the blood of Christ is called the blood of sprinkling, it is intimated, that the persons to whom it is applied shall be safe in the day of vengeance; and that though thousands should fall at their side, and ten thousands at their right hand, it shall do them no harm.

Another sprinkling of blood took place at Sinai soon after the law was given, when burnt offerings and peace offerings were sacrificed to the Lord, and when Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar; and when he took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you." This was a solemn ratification of the covenant betwixt God and Israel, and an intimation of the doom which awaited their infidelity; and when this epithet is applied to the blood of Christ, it suggests that by it the covenant of grace is confirmed, and all its blessings are made sure.

The last sprinkling of blood which I shall mention, is that made on the great day of atonement. While the cloud of incense was rising from the censer of the high priest, and covering the mercy-seat in the most holy place, he was to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice seven times before it. By this solemn rite, the intercession of our Lord was typified. The blood which he poured out on the altar was his own; and he urges its merits in all

his prayers before the throne. In this intercession there is no intermission, and for believers in every age he pleads with as much fervour as if this work was new to him, and as if in their happiness he alone was interested.

It must be carefully remembered, that these sprinklings of blood had no saving efficacy but what they derived from his merit, and that their influence was limited to the Jewish people. But in the blood of Christ there is an original virtue ; it shall sprinkle many nations, and shall be applied for redemption to the ends of the earth.

But let us consider to what object its influence extends. And I may remark, that in consequence of the shedding of this blood, all the divine perfections are employed for the advantage of believers. Having made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, Jehovah finds in them, not the objects of his curse, but of his protection and kindness, and the divine character in all its forms is now contemplated with confidence and love. No anxiety is now felt as to the extent of mercy, and no fear as to the demands of justice. In consequence of the satisfaction which Christ hath given, justice hath no vengeance to execute, and love hath no obstacles to surmount in the communication of its blessings. To the wisdom of God the wanderer can now look for guidance ; the sinner who had destroyed himself, finds help in his power, and goodness can load with its benefits even the children of wrath. This blood has been sprinkled before the throne of grace, of which the mercy-seat was a type, and we can now approach it with boldness.

Its influence is felt in the heart and conscience. The heart is loathsome with depravity, and the testimony of heaven respecting it cannot be questioned, " God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was

only evil continually." Its purification was hopeless as to aught that men or angels could either suggest or do, but by this blood it is washed, justified, and sanctified. The conscience is full of cursing and bitterness. In spite of all the efforts of the sinner to palliate his offences, to silence its remonstrances, or to mitigate its fury, it condemns him without mercy, and threatens him with a punishment, its intimations of which it will not permit him to call uncertain or exaggerated; but by this blood it becomes pure and peaceable. It is the Spirit who applies it for this purpose, and he does it effectually in spite of all the reluctance of the corrupted heart, and all the opposition of Satan, and with a promptitude becoming his love to holiness, his mercy to the perishing sinner, and the regard which he hath to the honour of the Saviour. The rage, which no voice of flattery could soothe, is now appeased; and the pollution, which no tears of penitence and no efforts of amendment could remove, is now washed away. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!"

This blood hath procured all the privileges of Christians. It is the price which was paid for them, and it is this that gives them a peculiar value in the estimation of the redeemed, that in each of them they can trace the merit of Christ's sacrifice, and the generosity of that love which deems no effort too arduous to save, and which was stronger than agony and death. We see his condemnation in our acceptance, his humiliation in our sonship, his agony in our peace, his desertion in our fellowship, his curse in our felicity, and his death in our life.

It secures the acceptance of all the believer's duties. The pomp of worship, the rigour of fasts, and the parade

of charities, can be of no avail with the Father of our spirits. Nay, even the purest services of good men are stained with such defects as would lead to their rejection, if they were not presented in the Redeemer's name. In their charities, God sees the influence of the Mediator's grace, and in their repentance the melting power of his sufferings; and this is the animating principle which quickens them in duty, the idea of what they owe to him who has redeemed them by his blood, and the recollection of his great object in saving them. It is this that gives to Christian morality its high tone, its unbending firmness, and its unconquerable zeal. The motives of heathen moralists, when decked in all the beauty and pomp of language, seem cold and feeble when compared with the simplest statement of what Christ hath done, and with the constraint of his love who died for us that we might live to him.

I only add, on this part of the subject, that its influence is felt in all the afflictions of the righteous. It is this that assures the good man that there is no vindictive wrath in any of his sufferings, and how light are the severest afflictions to which we are liable when unmixed with the curse of God, and when, instead of being obliged to consider them as the commencement of the pains of hell, we can view them as the salutary discipline of wisdom and love. It teaches the sufferer to bear them with meek acquiescence, and has given courage to saints when death was approaching them in forms most terrible to nature. This thought, "It is Christ that died, and is risen again, and he is at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us," can effectually repress impatience under present evils, and all terror as to futurity. It is on this account that death hath no sting, the grave no victory, judgment no condemnation, and the second death no power.

II. I proceed now, in the *second* place, to show you how this blood speaks better things than that of Abel.

It has been supposed by some that the Apostle refers to the blood of Abel's sacrifice ; but as it was a type of the atonement of Christ, the same consolations were exhibited by both. It is much more natural to suppose that the allusion is to the murder of Abel, and to the language of God to Cain, " The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to me from the ground ;" and in this view of it the mind is led to form a contrast, which renders the forgiveness and peace which result from the death of Christ still more wonderful and striking. Let us, therefore, consider how different the effect of his death is from that of Abel.

1. The blood of Abel cried to God for vengeance on him that shed it, but the blood of Christ pleads for mercy and forgiveness to sinners. The murder of Abel was an atrocious crime. To deprive a fellow creature of life is an act of impious rebellion against the Creator of man, and of the greatest cruelty to the individual cut off from existence. Property stolen by the thief may be recovered, the reputation which has been blasted by the slanderer may be regained, and injuries sustained by the blow of violence may be healed ; but the life which has been taken away can be restored by no created power. The person slain by Cain was his brother, for whom the law of nature strongly claimed his love, and whose infancy and youth had sprung up by his side ; and if he was his only brother, his parents would lose all the consolation which they had anticipated in their offspring, for what pleasure could they take in a son thus destroyed, and in a living murderer ? The crime, too, was aggravated by the excellence of Abel's character. He was not a stain to creation, a pest to his father's house, or one eager to ruin him, but a brother amiable and friendly, accepted of God, and the joy of his parents. And this was the horrid principle which prompted him to this crime,—envy at the superior excellence of his brother, and at his favour with God. Now, a deed so atrocious called on the Judge of the

world to inflict the most severe punishment on him by whom it was committed.

The shedding of Christ's blood, as an act of men, was a more horrible crime than this ; and this will be obvious, if we consider the dignity of his character, the end of his coming into the world, and the extensive, generous, and unwearied beneficence of his life. Had this blood called for vengeance, it would have been answered in flaming fire, and in everlasting destruction ; but it pleads for mercy. It asks this not in the tone of a suppliant, but with every claim to be answered, which the all-sufficiency of his merits can present. While the first drops of this blood were flowing on the cross, this was his cry, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ;" and that prayer was answered in the salvation of thousands who were accessory to the crucifixion of our Lord. Yea, this blood still pleads for pardon to the guilty. It exhibits a full satisfaction to law and justice for all their offences, and a complete title to all the blessings of grace and glory. No pardon is granted but at its solicitation, nor can an act of forgiveness be denied for which it pleads. Mercy can thus be shown to the guilty without the least infringement of the divine threatenings, and without any encouragement to the violation of the law ; and what could not be effected by the oblation of all ages and countries is now accomplished, the condemnation of sin in the flesh, and its forgiveness, at that throne, of which righteousness and judgment are the habitation.

2. The blood of Abel spoke consternation and horror to the heart of Cain, but Christ's blood speaks peace and rest to the awakened conscience. It appears that Cain at first felt no compunction for his crime, and when challenged by his Maker, replied with the most shocking insolence and hypocrisy. But Jehovah's expostulation with him confounded him, and produced the most agonizing pangs of terror and remorse ; the reproaches of his parents were bitter, but from them he might flee,

but whither could he go from the upbraidings of his own heart, or the forebodings of destruction? That blood which he had shed followed him wherever he went, and the image of his murdered brother haunted him like a spectre while he was awake, and cursed his dreams while he slumbered.

But the blood of Jesus bids the trembling sinner hope, and saith to the man groaning in dust and in ashes, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." It tells us that no guilt can be so aggravated as to be beyond the reach of pardon, and no depravity so extreme that its removal exceeds its virtue. Behold that aged transgressor, whose eyes are at last opened to see the wickedness of his conduct in its true light, and who is looking back with unutterable horror on a long life spent in sin! he thinks that for him there can be no mercy, till he reads that the "blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and hope arises in the trembling heart, and he finds relief from all his horrors in the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God.

Go into the cell of that condemned criminal, whose conscience is roused, and who is looking beyond the terrors of his doom on earth to the vengeance of eternal fire. What must the agony of his mind be, which makes his limbs tremble under such weighty chains, and his low dungeon to resound with such bitter cries! In this frightful scene grace at length displays its power. The Son of God is made known to him as the propitiation for sin, and, looking to the cross with a heart which knows its own bitterness, but which feels the strong consolation which the blood of Jesus imparts, he says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief. With this I can go in peace to the scaffold, and with this I can go to the judgment-seat of Christ in hope."

But all believers have this hope, that being justified by Christ's blood, they shall be saved from wrath

through him. Amid such consolation, the tears of the penitent will flow, and his heart will throb ; but these emotions are far sweeter than any ever excited by the world. And no voice of encouragement can be compared with this. The presumption of the heart may cry, Peace, peace ; the lips of flattery may prophesy smooth things ; and from the scene of his charities and good deeds, the vain may imagine a voice arises to heaven, which pleads with success for a great reward to them ; but if the mind is duly enlightened, and the conscience thoroughly awakened, these sounds will appear as upbraidings of their guilt, or as a mockery of their wretchedness. There is only one voice to which the wounded spirit will listen ; and when this blood gives quietness, none can cause trouble. There is no tempest in the heart which it cannot still, no prospect which it cannot brighten, and no plague which it cannot cure.

III. Let me now, in the *third* place, point out what is implied in the expression, that Christians are come to this blood.

This phrase intimates their knowledge of it. They were not heathens, lost in the fooleries and the delusions of superstition ; neither were they, though Jews, left to form their ideas of this blood from types and dark predictions. In the preaching of the gospel, they had been informed that Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and that he was now at the right hand of God in the character of our Advocate. What had philosophy to unfold which could solace like this word of reconciliation, or what could the heart of man conceive so adapted to our misery, and so full of grace and peace to us ! This information has been communicated to us. From our earliest years we have listened to the preaching of the cross ; in every lesson of piety, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, has been the chief theme, and before our eyes Christ hath been

set forth evidently crucified. With such clear discoveries of the only method of salvation, we must be without excuse if we perish in our sins.

It implies faith in it. If these Christians had gone no further than the knowledge of it, they might have died in their pollutions. But they believed that the Saviour was possessed of all the excellence which the Bible attributes to him, that he died to redeem us from all iniquity, that his sacrifice hath infinite efficacy, and that it was their wisdom and their duty to rely on it, and to improve it for the sanctification and comfort of the soul. What a wonderful triumph of divine grace was this ! The pride of the Jews was humbled before the cross of him whom they despised and rejected ; all their legal hopes were renounced for redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace ; and all their splendid rites were abandoned for a simple reliance on the one atonement. And have we faith in this blood ? Faith regards this blood as the cause of acceptance with God, a source of consolation, and a motive to holiness. It is only at the cross that it finds the hope of mercy either warrantable or safe. The comfort which flows from it is the only consolation which the heart will receive, or which has the least influence on its sorrows and fears ; and while it feels the moral energy inspired by this scene, it requires not the impulse, and abhors the aid, of any sordid principle in avoiding what is evil, or in performing what is good.

This phrase implies experience ; for these Christians had felt the influence of this blood on their hearts, dispelling the horrors of guilt, and scattering the gloom of the grave ; sweetening the various services of religious worship, and prompting the different duties of the Christian life. This experience was not the impression of a delusive enthusiasm, in which the dreams of the fancy are mistaken for realities ; for they “ had the witness in themselves,” and it was evident to others, in their freedom from the pollutions of the world, and in that

tranquillity which no apprehension of the coming wrath could disturb. And happy will it be if we can say on good grounds that we have felt its influence, and if it is thus attested by the sanctity of our manners, and the elevation of our hope. It is at the cross that the awakened sinner loves to worship, and here alone he feels that he can either live or die.

I may add, that this statement of their privilege was intended as an excitement to their gratitude. This was a privilege of which they were altogether unworthy. It is the foundation of every other, and from it other blessings derive their sweetness. It was a privilege which might well call forth their eternal thanksgivings, and to its value no lapse of time should render them insensible. Divine grace had brought them to it in spite of all their prejudices; and if ye have felt your hearts drawn to the cross of Jesus with cords of love, amidst the multitude of mercies which rise there to your view, this will appear the chief, that the Lamb who was slain has redeemed you to God by his blood.—This is also a caution against apostasy. To draw back from such a Saviour, to seek for rest in the ceremonies of Moses, after they had found it in the blood of the cross, would be so base a return for his grace, such a horrible violation of their vows, and so fatal a blow to their interests and hopes, that they could not too carefully guard against every approach to it. And if ye have come to Jesus, it is equally necessary for you to adhere to his cause and law, for thus alone shall you be found of him in peace.

I shall now conclude this subject with a short improvement.

1. This subject shows us the state and character of those who may be invited to partake of the Lord's Supper. They are such as have seen themselves exposed to the wrath of God, and have been reconciled to him by the death of his Son. While some imagine that God is too merciful to act severely to his creatures,

count the threats of his displeasure words of vanity, and call the fears of it, under which some have laboured, the dark impressions of a horrible insanity, they have fled to Jesus as their refuge. They are such as have been convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment ; and who, instead of seeking rest in the forms of religion, have sought and obtained it in the blood of sprinkling. And while some are so ignorant of their guilt and depravity, as to imagine that they need no purification but what their own efforts can produce, and no atonement but what their own repentance can yield, they know that a sacrifice of infinite value was necessary to expiate the guilt of men, and that the energy of almighty grace was alone competent to the renovation of the human heart and character.

They are such as feel the blood of Christ to be precious. The combined excellencies of saints and angels cannot be compared with it. It is more precious than friendship with all its pleasures, light with all its utility, and life with all its blessings ; for it gives peace with God, the illumination of the Spirit, and life everlasting in heaven. It is so precious, that in every psalm they express their gratitude for it, in every prayer they solicit a continued application of it, in their repentance it is their only preservation from despair ; it makes them ready for every act of self-denial ; and in the whole course of duty, it renders them fervent in spirit, and gives them a pleasure never known in sloth, or in self-indulgence in any form. And they are such as listen to Christ's voice in his law, as well as in his blood ; they are well pleased with the ordination of heaven, that sanctification and obedience must be the result of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ ; and they wish every corruption subdued, and every faculty made the instrument of righteousness. Now I call on such to observe the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, whose cup is the communion of Christ's blood. Come, ye young disciples, and to you this blood will speak better things than all

the gay flatteries of the world. Come, ye disciples in middle life, and to you it will speak better things than ever flowed from the lips of Mammon. Come, ye aged, and its soothing voice will keep you from regretting the failure of the joys which once delighted you. Come, ye sorrowful, and to you it will speak better things than all the suggestions of worldly wisdom or presumptuous hope ; and come, ye trembling penitents, and to you it will say, The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die. We approach thy table, O our Redeemer, with this request : “ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean ; wash thou me, and I shall be whiter than the snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.”

2. The subject suggests various exhortations to saints. Much hath been forgiven you, and therefore you ought to love much. In every contemplation of what Christ hath done for you, you ought to feel a more humbling conviction of your own guilt and helplessness, a higher admiration of his power and grace, warmer zeal to serve him, and a greater eagerness to relieve the miserable, to reclaim the erring, and to forgive those who have injured you. Beware of wounding your consciences. You have already felt the horrors of a wounded spirit, and will you, for any gratification or advantage which sin can yield you, compel it again to upbraid and torment you ? Exercise yourselves daily to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man. Keep yourselves unspotted from the world. You profess that you have been purified by the blood of Christ, beware lest ye be entangled in the pollutions of the world. Imbibe not its corrupt opinions, adopt not its immoral customs, follow not its dissipated manners. There is a singularity in trifles, which is a token of a weak and superstitious mind ; but to be singular in the practice of what is holy, and in avoiding what is base and vicious, is a proof of exalted and intrepid goodness.

Cherish towards each other the spirit that becomes you. Let the horrid conduct of Cain to Abel strengthen the attachments of domestic life, and lead you to persevere in the conduct by which it will be blessed. There are some who are smooth, affable, and obliging abroad, while they are tyrants in their families; they have the smile of courtesy and the language of compliment for others, but to their domestics their manners are sour, and their conduct is outrageous; but the true Christian can never be an unkind or cruel relation, nor can he forget, that while Jesus lived and died for all, he was in the private circle peculiarly kind and gentle, the support of his mother, and the consolation of his friends. But remember that all your fellow Christians are your brethren, redeemed by the same blood, children of the same Father, and heirs of the same inheritance, and let brotherly love continue. Far from your lips be the voice of slander, from your hearts the repinings of envy, from your conduct the deeds of oppression or revenge. Rejoice even in the superior attainments of others; be thankful that God smiles on them, though he frowns on you, and that he accepts their offerings even while you fear that yours are rejected. Christian love is a prominent article in our creed, and let it be the leading feature in our characters, and the ruling principle in our lives. And make continual use of the blood of sprinkling. Look to it in all your worship for acceptance, in all your duties for aid, and in all your sorrows for peace and rest. In heaven it will be extolled in every song, remembered in every recollection, sprinkled on the door of every mansion, and blessed in the affections of every heart.

Lastly, Let unconverted men listen to the lessons which they are taught by this subject. You are perhaps in a state of indifference and insensibility, or you are quieting your consciences by a false hope; but soon shall you hear the thunder of the closing gate of mercy, the worm that shall never die shall fasten upon you,

and the fire that shall never be quenched begin to consume you. This doom may yet be avoided, and hear how the Saviour calls you to renounce all confidence in yourselves, and to a humble reliance on his atoning blood. Often has he spoken to you in the language of compassion and grace, and this will aggravate your misery if you perish, that though you were entreated in the bowels of Jesus Christ, you would not hear, and your blood shall be upon your own heads. O hasten to the fountain that is still open for sin and for uncleanness ; your peril is imminent, your time is short, your days are numbered, your graves are ready, your judgment is at hand. By all that is precious in the Redeemer's blood, by all that is sweet in the Saviour's mercy, by all that is valuable in the happiness of your own souls, I beseech you to be reconciled unto God, to receive the gift of Christ's righteousness, to submit to his sceptre, and to devote yourselves to him for time and eternity ; and in every one in this audience may that Redeemer be glorified, who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood. Amen.

SERMON III.

REFLECTIONS AFTER FELLOWSHIP WITH THE
SAVIOUR.

LUKE XXIV. 32.

“And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and opened unto us the Scriptures ?”

WHEN we call up to our view any scene in which the heart has been deeply interested, we have a vivid recollection of the various emotions which we felt. The wonder which was excited by what was great or unexpected ; the joy and gratitude which glowed within us in the experience of kindness, or in the assurance of regard, where we thought we were forgotten ; the satisfaction we felt in the removal of our perplexities, the encouragements which roused us to the prosecution of our duties, and the peace that calmed us by the return of soft and charitable emotions, rise to our remembrance ; and though the pleasure which they yield in recollection be feebler than that experienced in the original sensations, it is such as to solace and gratify us when in present objects we can find little enjoyment.

It is thus that memory strengthens the best principles of the soul, that past felicity is enjoyed again, and that good men are led to confidence and hope in scenes of darkness and terror. Every part of our mental constitution, when examined with attention, will be found to

suggest proofs of the wisdom and kindness of our Creator, and of its adaptation, under the direction of his grace, for presenting all that is interesting in the past, or attractive in the future, for renewing pleasurable feeling and promoting active exertion.

These remarks are beautifully illustrated by the reflection of the two disciples after the interview with their Master. In that blessed interview, their prejudices were dispelled, their views were enlarged, and their souls were cheered, their understandings were filled with light, and their hearts with love; those emotions which affected them so delightfully in association with their Master, and which disappointment and fear had chilled, were revived; the crucifixion of their Lord, which had given such a shock to their hope, and such a wound to their affections, appeared to them now as the appointment of mercy to man, and as a prelude to the glory of their Saviour; and they felt themselves impelled to rejoin the disciples, and to stand up for him whose cause they once thought desperate, and with whom they were once ready to conclude that they had parted for ever.

In the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we trust that the Redeemer hath shone into your souls, to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory; your hearts were touched with a live coal from the altar, and your purposes to serve him were strong and lively: and to teach you the improvement you ought to make of such a privilege, is my object in the present discourse. Interviews with Jesus will not be forgotten even in that world where he is seen as he is.—In this discourse I shall speak,

I. Of Christ's opening up the Scriptures to his disciples during his intercourse with them.

II. Of the effects of this holy light on the heart; and,

III. Of the import of this mutual appeal, "they said one to another," &c.

I. Let me then call your attention to the gracious act of the Saviour here mentioned.

1. The account given of it suggests, that good men often labour under much perplexity and darkness as to the meaning of Scripture. These disciples had not considered the predictions of the sufferings of the Messiah as at all applicable to him; and those which respected his glory, they had explained of the splendours and conquests of an earthly throne. Our views as to these points are more enlarged and spiritual, but many passages respecting his reign in the latter days, and the progress of his kingdom, are misunderstood by the most cautious expositors, and in many texts respecting our Lord's person, character, and works, there are things hard to be understood. There are representations of grace and duty which it is felt no easy matter to reconcile, and delineations of religious experience, which Christians weak in faith cannot read without forming the most painful conclusions as to their interest in the Saviour, and the most frightful anticipations of their future and final separation from his church. Even as to those texts, of whose meaning we have a just idea, we have very inadequate conceptions of their beauty, connexion, and influence.

Good men under the influence of despondency are apt to clothe texts of Scripture in forms of terror, and to consider the most encouraging expressions as suggesting no kindness nor hope to them; and at other times, through the deceitfulness of the heart, passages of the Bible may be conceived as giving countenance to error and folly. The Tempter is ever ready to present his false glosses of Scripture, to lead us to extravagance, or to lull us in security; and in every age there are persons who wrest the Scriptures to favour the most dangerous tenets. There are arts by which they can exhibit the grossest error in a specious form, and win to its side the prejudices and the passions of men; and there is an ingenuity

in the schemes of many a false teacher which strikes the simple, and a flattery offered to human vanity which allures assent.

Such a state of mind is like that of one who walks by a glimmering lamp in a stormy night. We are agitated by anxiety, we are apt to wander into courses injurious to ourselves or others, and duties are either neglected, or are performed in a manner so cold and careless, as fills us with grief and shame.

2. The text suggests that Christ unfolds his word to his disciples. His fitness for this work cannot be disputed, for he hath seven eyes, the seven Spirits of God, and the seven Stars. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. His willingness to perform it may be concluded from the offices with which he is invested ; he is the Apostle of our profession, the interpreter one among a thousand, and the light of the world. And there are various promises in which he assures us that he will give us light. This illumination is not to be expected in the indulgence of sloth, for seldom does a ray from heaven pierce the darkness of the sluggard, and seldom does the hand which guides the meek and lowly draw aside the curtains which surround him, while the voice cries, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." It is in prayer for holy wisdom, in meditation on God's law, in watching at Wisdom's gates, in sitting at Christ's feet, in leaning on his breast, and in brotherly admonition, that his light is to be expected. How encouraging to prayer is that assurance, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." It is in the secret chamber of devout meditation that the angel touches us, and says to us, "I am now come to give thee skill and understanding." It is while we are hearing his gospel that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation descends on us ; while we are at the communion table that the Spirit glorifies Christ, by taking of his

truths and blessings, and shewing them to us ; exhibits to us in a way which melts the whole heart, the efficacy of his cross, and the tenderness of his love ; and in social converse on religious topics, mistakes are rectified, knowledge is communicated, the unwary are admonished by beneficial counsel, and the backsliding reclaimed to a pious course.

Often hath Jesus sent his word, and healed those whom false doctrine was consuming like a canker, exposed to abhorrence self-righteous delusions, opened up sources of consolation where we supposed all was barren and dreary, illustrated the operations of his grace in such a way as to comfort the feeble mind, and unmasked those vile pretenders who, with feigned words and specious plans, labour to beguile from truth and holiness. Nay, to some he hath given a wonderful insight into prophecy, shed light and beauty over the train of ancient ceremonies, and opened such prospects of judgment and futurity, as have quenched the desires of the worldly mind, pointed every effort to the attainment of salvation, and stamped on every feeling the impress of eternity.

3. The text intimates that Christ performs this office in a most condescending and familiar manner. How evident is this in the interview to which the text refers ! Though the most glorious prospects were opening to his view, and though he had brought to a most honourable close his course of abasement and suffering, in a humble garb he joins himself to those two travellers, walks with them a considerable way, and in the most patient and ample manner expounds to them the things concerning himself. Compared with such a journey, how low seem the most splendid movements of triumphal pageantry ! Let it not be thought that the term he applied to them in the commencement of this conference, is inconsistent with this statement, for it signifies properly “ ye inconsiderate ;” and their eagerness for his stay proves, that in

his sentiments and manner there was a very powerful charm.

The Saviour shows equal grace in illumination still. The men whom human wisdom passed by with disdain; those of whom spiritual pride said, "This people who know not the law are cursed;" and those who, from their tender age, limited capacity, or scanty opportunities of improvement, seemed least likely of all others to attain the knowledge of divine and spiritual things, have been so taught of God, that they have had reason to say, "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life." Our dullness does not make him turn from us with disgust, nor does our unbelief provoke him to give us up to the love of darkness. His ear is open to the feeblest cry for knowledge, and his words are soft and sweet as the descent of the dew, or as the mild beam of departing day. Even though we have not acted suitably to the counsels he hath given us; nay, though we may have abused his light to encourage the presumption and the folly of our hearts, he will not cast us into outer darkness. While advancing years made Moses and Aaron less able to bear the frowardness of the Israelites, the mercy of the Redeemer is ever the same. How different was the manner in which God talked with Israel, and how opposite the impressions which it excited! They said, "Behold, the Lord our God hath showed us his glory, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire, and have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die." There authority appeared in overwhelming glory. The brightness of Deity was seen in the lightning, and his voice was heard in the thunder; but in Christ's talking with the disciples, grace was poured from his lips, and the patient kindness of mercy blessed the

scene. It wanted the splendour of the transfiguration, but it was as richly marked with grace and truth. No bright cloud overshadowed them, but compassion shed over them her solacing influence. His raiment was not white and glistening, but it was the garb best fitted to mark him out as still meek and lowly in heart; and though no voice came from the excellent glory, his voice was heard, who speaks as never man did.

II. Let us now consider the influence of this holy light on the heart.

The instructions of many have no power over the heart; the feelings continue quite uninterested, while the judgment is corrected or established in its conclusions. But when Christ enlightens, he makes the heart to burn, and it is not a slight or transient, but a powerful and a lasting impression, which he produces. When Elijah decided the controversy betwixt the God of Israel and Baal, he said, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God." In vain did the priests of Baal cry from morning till noon for fire to descend to consume their sacrifice; not a spark fell; and thus fruitless are all the mere efforts of man to kindle in the heart the fire of devotion. But when Elijah prayed, fire came down and consumed the sacrifice, and dried up the water that had been poured round the altar; and thus triumphantly does the power of the Saviour's grace kindle in the heart the fervours of piety.

But with what emotions did the hearts of these disciples burn? Their hearts burned with love to their Master. The view which our Lord had given of his sufferings and grace, melted their hearts. They felt that they should have esteemed him more highly, and adhered to him more courageously. The graces of his character, the gentleness of his manners, and the kindness of his heart, appeared to them in a more amiable light than ever; and while they thought of his good-

ness, they would feel shame and regret at all the pain they had given him.

Now, such is the effect of all manifestations of the Saviour. Beholding his glory and grace in the light of his word, we feel him to be most precious to us, and his voice is sweeter than that of the dearest friend. At the communion table, Christ represents his sufferings and glory in a way calculated to encourage hope and love in the heart. In thinking of his death, we feel, "he loved me, and gave himself for me;" in following his ascension, we hear him saying, "I go to prepare a place for you;" and while we muse on his second coming, we remember his assurance, "I will come again and receive you to myself;" and can we do this without impressions of his kindness, which melt the heart? Love to Christ heightens every holy pleasure, and binds closer every virtuous tie. It can take the bitterest cup from his hands, and the hardest mandate from his lips. With him labour is easy, and for him death is gain.

But the hearts of those disciples did burn with love for the truth. Statements which were once offensive to them, they now saw to be full of grace and wisdom. In Christ's light they beheld them; and the light which Jesus still sheds over the word, discovers to us such wisdom, life, and glory in it, that we feel that it is better to us than the treasures of the world. We regret the indifference with which we once regarded it, and are willing to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. How powerful is the assurance of its divinity which is then felt; objections which once seemed plausible, now seem unworthy of regard; and the defence of truth seems that of our best interests. The Bible is the companion of the good man's journeys, his best solace in sorrow, and his only guide to heaven. With it for our treasure, we have all and abound; with it for our teacher, we are wise to salvation; with it for our moni-

tor, no craft shall beguile us ; and with it for our hope, our hearts shall be set on things eternal.

It must ever be remembered, that it is to the power of Christ that we are to attribute all the influence of the truth over us. It is his explanation that makes it a light to our feet, his fulfilment of it that renders it a support to our faith, his vindication of it that establishes our confidence, and his application of it that gives to it spirit and life to our hearts.

But the hearts of these disciples were made to burn with zeal for our Lord's honour, and pity for their brethren ; " for they rose up the same hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, and told them all the things that were done in the way, and how Jesus was known to them in the breaking of bread." They had felt, while their Master was talking with them, the strongest impressions of the justice of his cause, and their great wish was to rectify the mistakes of their brethren by the arguments by which their own had been corrected, and to draw them from the frightful gloom from which their Redeemer's grace had brought them. Whatever perils might attend their journey to Jerusalem, and whatever might be the incredulity with which their testimony might be received, they felt that they could not but speak the things which they had seen and heard. They wished to make their brethren happy as they were. When Christ illuminates the mind, we see how worthy he is to be served ; that he died and rose again, that he might be the Lord of the dead and of the living ; that his followers may be assured of his gracious countenance, and feel impelled to say, that we will hold fast his name in opposition to every enemy, and that we will comfort others with the revelations of his mercy. False zeal is like a consuming fire. It is here that instruments of cruelty are prepared, and here the brand is lighted which spreads around desolation and misery ; but true zeal is like the sun, whose

light and heat diffuse fertility and gladness. There is life in its beam, and healing in its wings, and its benefits are spread without distinction of kindred or clime, of forms or tenets, of sect or party. It utters its voice, not in anathemas, but in blessings, not in condemning others, but ourselves ; it puts not forth its hands to oppress or to spoil, but lifts up holy hands to God without wrath or doubting ; instead of defiling God's altar with blood, it offers on it the sacrifice of righteousness ; and instead of extorting a reluctant assent to the truth by threats or by torture, it wins by meek and affectionate persuasion. It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.

III. Let us now consider the import of the mutual appeal made in the text.

1. It suggests that the impressions made on the minds of the disciples during their intercourse with our Lord, they distinctly recollect, and can specify exactly. It is not with them as with a dream, which is forgotten amidst the next creation of the fancy, or of which we have when we awake but a confused and imperfect idea ; but the impression is clear and strong as the most potent and interesting of our waking realities. "I sat down," saith the church, "under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love."

I do not say that in the presence of Jesus no impressions are made but those that are sweet and pleasing. There are seasons when his frown terrifies, and his rebuke confounds the heart. "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall, my soul hath still in remembrance, and is humbled in me ;" but by this discipline we are corrected and prepared for the safe experience of religious enjoyment. Fourteen years after Paul had been caught into paradise, he mentions that vision ; the splendour of which was so bright

that his faculties were overpowered ; but the scene to which the text refers corresponded more with the usual manifestations of the divine glory, and our Lord intended it for direct and speedy disclosure to the brethren.

2. It suggests that the impressions made on their hearts at such seasons, good men may communicate to each other. How eager are worldly men to talk of what they felt in the gay scenes of life ; how the tale of fictitious distress melted them into tears, and how ludicrous scenes amused them ; and shall it be thought strange that Christians should talk of far higher scenes and feelings ? Let us not be silent from the idea of such a statement being inconsistent with Christian modesty. There are modes and seasons of disclosing them which it forbids, but there is a statement of what God hath done for the soul, which ought to have a place in the song of gratitude, and which may be made safely to the ear of friendship.

Neither let any be silent, that they may not be thought under delusion. If the dread of the world's censure is to influence you, you will practise no Christian duty whatever, for your forbearance will be called tameness, and your sobriety a morose parsimony. I may add, that the statement in the text shows that religious experience courts not a public disclosure, where it will be heard with contempt or discredit, but seeks that hallowed circle where it will edify and cheer.

But some disciple of Jesus bemoans himself thus : " The Saviour is gone, and the impressions of his presence have passed away ; the sun is set, and all is dark and chill : " but you ought to talk of his presence, to show that your loss of it cannot make you ungrateful for your privilege, however transient, and to encourage your hope of his gracious return. Human language cannot do justice to such feelings, but though you cannot state fully the influence of Christ's presence, you may convey an idea of it that may be most striking. Christian experience seeks only the artless detail of simplicity and

truth ; and so far will this disclosure be from exciting the envy of your friends, that your faith may be confirmed and your joy heightened by a detail of feelings as ardent, and consolations as abundant as your own.

3. It suggests that there is a wonderful similarity in Christian experience. There was probably a diversity of mind and temper in these two disciples ; the prejudices of the one might be stronger than those of the other, and his heart less susceptible ; but both are convinced by the Saviour's reasonings, and the hearts of both are kindled by the force of truth. Take Christians from different countries, or from various conditions and pursuits in life, and most dissimilar in their education and habits, you may find them of opposite sentiments on topics of mere speculation or worldly polity, but on the great articles of Christian experience they are one. They have all been made to drink into one spirit. The details which a good man may give of what God hath done for his soul may be considered by the men of the world as the dreams of a whimsical individual, but they exhibit the impressions and the views of the excellent of the earth.

Some understandings may see more clearly, and some hearts may burn more fervently when Christ talks with them, but there is no judgment which in such a case can remain blind, and no heart can continue dead. I admit that there are some who make pretensions to impulses and visions, unknown to the generation of the righteous ; but instead of priding themselves in this singularity, let them fear lest the words of the Prophet be true of them : " He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand ?"

It is a most pleasing consideration to good men, that in their devout impressions they are not singular. There are some who call themselves sober and rational Christians, who reprobate their feelings in harsh language ; but that language shows, that amidst their high preten-

sions to a sound mind, they are strangers to the spirit of power and of love. They can be indulgent to every thing but what they call enthusiasm. And how audacious must the enemies of experimental religion be, in reviling that which is supported by the united testimony of the wisest and the best of men, and in representing such persons as the agents of delusion, or the victims of frenzy ! If opposition to the common sense and feelings of mankind on other topics is considered as a disgusting singularity, it is the height of absurdity to imagine that hostility to the knowledge of the holy indicates either acuteness or enlargement of mind. "Wisdom is justified of her children."

CONCLUSION.

The subject shows us how to distinguish the fervour of true religion from the blaze of enthusiastic passion. Religious fervour springs from knowledge, the other is the offspring of ignorance and delusion. The former shows itself in zeal for the weightier matters of the law, the latter spends its strength on forms and strifes of words. The former is like the star which guided the wise men to the place, where over the cradle of the Saviour angels were singing glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will to men ; the latter is like the fiery cross, which in its swift movements summoned, in the days of old, the clans of the hills to the battle. The one gives rise to the most pleasing reflections, the other produces only shame and regret when the delusion hath passed away. Religious fervour is modest in its statements, and candid in its judgments ; but fanaticism is proud, rash, and overbearing.

Since such are the results of divine illumination, let us pray for larger measures of it. Suppose not that to you all the intricacies of Scripture are open. David was wiser than his teachers, yet how earnestly does he pray

for divine teaching! Jesus said unto Nathanael, Thou shalt see greater things than these. Think not that he will not stoop to such an office now, when, after his humiliation was over, he was thus condescending. His pity for the ignorant and the bewildered is as powerful at this moment, amidst the light and glory of his Father's house, as when he was increasing in wisdom. These offices were not to be confined to his immediate disciples, for he is the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. Happy is it when the ministers of religion can thus address their people:—"I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ, that in every thing ye are enriched in all utterance, and in all knowledge."

Let Christians beware of every thing which may chill the holy fervour which hath been kindled within them. Associate not with the profane, who make it the object of derision, neither listen to the charges of those who call it being pious overmuch. It is strange that ardour should be admired in every thing but religion. Who blames the fervour with which the poet gazes on the magnificence of nature? or the searchings of heart with which friendship laments the loss of its object? And yet the man whose heart and whose flesh cry out for the living God, has been slandered as a hypocrite, or laughed at as a fool. Keep away from every scene of dissipation and folly. Most shocking is the transition from the scene where Christ walked and conversed with us, the scene of holy light and transport, to the house of mirth, where pleasure walks in her vain show, and ensnares by the flattering of her lips. Take heed lest you be overcharged with the cares of this life. Anxiety will as effectually destroy this fervour as any baser passion. When this fervour is gone, duty is viewed as a burden, affliction as a curse, and death as the king of terrors. This fire should be considered as more sacred than the vestal fires of Rome, which were kept perpe-

tually burning. If that fire ever went out, through the carelessness of any of its virgin keepers, the fault was punished with death. Give glory to the Redeemer as your teacher. Let the remembrance of the death you have been commemorating induce you to say, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood." To be the conqueror of ignorance and depravity, is an office in which he glories. At the communion table you professed that you were Christ's disciples; remember that one is your Master, even Christ, and that all ye are brethren. Murmur not at any of his sayings as hard, and be not ashamed of any of them, because they are offensive to worldly wisdom. Talk much with your fellow-disciples of the influence of his word. Cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge, and be not carried about with every wind of doctrine. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

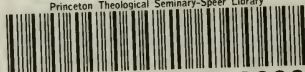
Finally, How sad should be the reflections of the irreligious at the close of such a solemnity! Ye have received no saving light, ye have felt no holy warmth. Amidst the gravity of outward seriousness, you have been saying to him, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways;" but how will you condemn your folly, when he will cast you off for ever! The fire of evil passion rages within you, and if not quenched it will burn to the lowest hell. Sin even now strikes you with horror in reflection, and much more will this be the case in the place of misery; yet not one penitential tear shall mingle itself with the multitudes you shall shed, nor shall one devout cry be heard amidst all your wailings. The association of the wicked may heighten their enjoyment here; but in the other world, the more of your ungodly companions that you meet, the greater shall be your misery. Memory and speech shall serve you but to upbraid each other with scenes which you shall wish you had never known; and what

promised most happiness here, shall be found the chief source of misery hereafter. Listen then to the Saviour's words, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." He can take away the heart of stone, and give you an heart of flesh; though your sins be as scarlet, he can make them as the snow; and he can turn you from darkness to his marvellous light. Devote your minds to his wisdom, your hearts to his love, and your lives to his service, and he will cause you to see the good of his chosen, and to rejoice in the gladness of his followers. Amen.

FINIS.



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